



## ANALYZING DISCOURSES OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN DANIEL MENGARA'S *MEMA* (2003) FROM HALLIDAYAN AND BUTLERIAN PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

This paper aims to explore how the two facets of gender- masculinity and femininity- are discursively enacted in Daniel Mengara's novel *Mema* (2003) from a linguistic perspective. The study draws on the Hallidayan brand of linguistics called Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL). Two theoretical constructs- Modality and Transitivity- are actually drawn from SFL; they serve as the theoretical underpinnings for the study. Using these two theoretical constructs, the study seeks to unveil the ideology that underpins gender performances as well as gender positioning in eight discourses (drawn from the novel) through the gendered representations of the female protagonist, Ntsame Minlame (*Mema*) and her husband, Sima Okang (*Pepa*), Akoma and her husband and Nkulanveng and his wife. The linguistic findings are interpreted based on Butler's view of gender, which holds that gender is performance.

**Key words:** Butler's view, Gender, Hallidayan perspective, *Mema*, Modality, Transitivity.

### 1. Introduction

*Mema* is a novel by a Gabonese-born citizen named Daniel Mengara. The novel, which was published in 2003, is set in a period going from the pre to the post-independence era in Gabon (called Ngabon or Ngabone in the fiction), a male-dominated milieu. A male-dominated setting is believed to be buttressed by patriarchy and its sexist or/and androcentric ideologies (Koussouhon, Akogbéto and Allagbé, 2015b). A patriarchal system, as argued by many scholars, is a stratification system that raises man up and debases woman at the same time. In other words, in a patriarchal system, man is given more privilege than woman in that he has access to power and uses it very often at the expense of woman. Power should be understood here as access to and control of institutions like government, religion, family, school, language, to name just a few. It ensues from this to note that man has from time immemorial had access to and used these

149- Once again, France is the victim of brutal Islamic terrorism.(Rep)150- Men, women and children viciously mowed down.(Rep)151- Lives ruined.(Exp)152- Families ripped apart, A nation in mourning.(Rep)153- The damage and devastation that can be inflicted by Islamic radicals has been proven over and over.(Rep)154- At the World Trade Center, at an office party in San Bernardino, at the Boston Marathon, and a military recruiting center in Chattanooga, Tennessee. And many other locations.(Rep)

155- Only weeks ago, in Orlando, Florida, 49 wonderful Americans were savagely murdered by an Islamic terrorist. (Rep)156-This time, the terrorist targeted LGBTQ community.(Rep)

157- No good. And we're going to stop it.(Com)158-As your president, I will do everything in my power to protect our LGBTQ citizens from the violence and oppression of a hateful foreign ideology.(Com)159- (you must) Believe me.(Dir)160- And I have to say as a Republican, it is so nice to hear you cheering for what I just said. Thank you.(Rep)

161- To protect us from terrorism, we need to focus on three things. (Dir)

162- We must have the best, absolutely the best, gathering of intelligence anywhere in the world.(Dir)The best.

163- We must abandon the failed policy of nation- building and regime change that Hillary Clinton pushed in Iraq, Libya, in Egypt, and Syria.(Dir)

164- Instead, we must work with all of our allies who share our goal of destroying ISIS and stamping out Islamic terrorism and doing it now, doing it quickly. (Dir)165- We're going to win. (Com)166- We're going to win fast. (Com)167- This includes working with our greatest ally in the region, the state of Israel.(Rep)

168- Recently I have said that NATO was obsolete.(Rep)169- Because it did not properly cover terror.(Rep)170- And also that many of the member countries were not paying their fair share.(Rep)171- As usual, the United States has been picking up the cost.(Rep)172- Shortly thereafter, it was announced that NATO will be setting up a new program in order to combat terrorism. A true step in the right direction.(Com)

173- Lastly, and very importantly, we must immediately suspend immigration from any nation that has been compromised by terrorism until such time as proven vetting mechanisms have been put in place.(Dir)174- We don't want them in our country. (Dir)





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### 1. Introduction

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institutions extensively to his own benefits. For instance, till a recent past, male writers have dominated the African literary landscape: one can cite, for example, such prolific pioneering writers as late Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka (Nigerians), Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (Kenyan), Ayi Kwei Amah (Ghanaian), etc. These male writers, as revealed by many linguistic and literary scholarly works, have increasingly depicted their societies from the phallogocentric perspective; i.e., they have represented the social realities of their people(s) through the eyes of their male characters; in so doing, they have reproduced and reinforced the patriarchal status quo in African literary canon.

The novel under scrutiny here is not phallogocentric at all in that it narrates a story of/about a woman and her experience. By so doing, it celebrates woman and even shows a certain inclination for a social world governed by the ideals of matriarchy. For example, in the opening of the novel, on page 3, the narrator-character, Elang Sima, typifying the importance of his mother, Mema, claims that "A child was able to know who he was, where he came from and where he was going only when he had a mother". Elsewhere on the same page, Mother is proverbially likened to land: "The people in my village used to say that a people without a land was like a child without a mother". In fact, the novel exudes a social world wherein woman, and not man, is the powerful one; she rules, governs and controls her society. It follows from this to argue that this novel perfectly answers or provides an answer to two essential epistemological questions often raised by scholars or researchers from such branches of scholarship as language and gender studies, women studies, literary studies, feminist studies, social studies, cultural sciences, political sciences, theology, psychology, linguistics, etc. The questions are: "Can a male writer see through the eyes of a female persona?" and "Is it possible to move beyond the male-female gender binary system?" (Monro, 2005:1) or "Is it possible for a man/woman to perform feminine/masculine roles?"

The ongoing study seeks to explore how the two facets of gender- masculinity and femininity- are discursively enacted in Daniel Mengara's novel *Mema* (2003) from a linguistic perspective. This novel has been premised to depict both male and female characters in roles, attributes or traits that do not conform to the patriarchal status quo (Allagbé and Allagbé, 2015); the status quo is male-dominance and power. The analysis draws on the two theoretical constructs of Modality and Transitivity (Eggins, 1994/2004; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Bloor and Bloor, 2004; Fontaine, 2013) to unveil gender performances as well as gender positioning in the novel through the gendered representations of the female protagonist, Ntsame Minlame (Mema) and her husband, Sima Okang (Pepa), Akoma and her



husband, and Nkulanveng and his wife. In the next section, a certain number of recent research works that have drawn on SFL in their study of contemporary African literature are reviewed.

## 2. A Brief Literature Review

Many linguists have recently drawn on SFL to study various aspects of meaning in contemporary African literature. Some of these scholars are Koussouhon and Allagbé (2013), Koussouhon, Akogbéto and Allagbé (2015a), Koussouhon, Akogbéto, Koutchadé and Allagbé (2015), Koussouhon and Dossoumou (2014 and 2015a and b), Allagbé (2016), and Koutchadé and Mehouéno (2016). Koussouhon and Allagbé's paper (2013) describes the lexicogrammar of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's fictional texts, viz. *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of A Yellow Sun* (2007) and *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009). In other words, this study describes the three simultaneous strands of meaning- Experiential, Interpersonal and Textual- encoded in three extracts drawn from the writer's texts. The three meanings are said to be respectively represented by the grammatical structures of Transitivity, Mood and Theme. This study reveals the writer's attitude and ideological stance vis-à-vis her writing and by extension her society. The analysis actually points out the writer's subscription to the feminist ideology. Also, as the analysis exudes, the language of the three extracts does contain such features as cohesion and coherence that ensure texture therein.

Koussouhon, Akogbéto and Allagbé (2015a) explore gender relations in Amma Darko's *The Housemaid* (1998). They draw on Mood grammar to pinpoint how the language of the two extracts culled from the novel depicts or encodes relations between male and female characters. Gender relations, as the researchers note in their introduction, have been represented one-sidedly or asymmetrically in early male-authored texts; i.e., one sex, the male sex precisely, has been given voice, represented positively and foregrounded. The assumption is that, given the rise of feminism in the seventies and its supposed pervasive influence in contemporary African literature, Darko would shift to the other extreme of gender; i.e., the female sex or mediate the two. The analysis reveals that Darko's literary language encodes both male and female personae symmetrically. It also exudes that there is a variability of the relations of role and power in/across the two extracts. In another insightful article, Koussouhon et al. (2015) seek to decode the context of

ideology in the same novel. The scholars use the Hallidayan Transitivity model to unveil the linguistic structures that obviously encode the world-view or ideological stance of the writer in two selected extracts. The theoretical hypothesis in this study is that a fictional (or narrative) text is framed by the authorial ideology. Language is also hypothesized to be the sole gateway into the authorial ideology. The transitivity study does display the ideology underpinning the fictional world of the text, which is characterized by a gender-balanced representation. The ideology drawn from the analysis is further likened to the human-centered perspective, which favours a full and fair depiction of human beings (male and female) as well as their perceptions, relations, roles, etc., in literature. The presence of the human-centered perspective in Darko's fiction, as the researchers cogently contend, confirms her being influenced by the feminist movement that spurted in Africa and elsewhere in the seventies (Lakoff, 1975).

Allagbé (2016) further drives the contention above home by submitting, through a finely tuned study that draws on literary onomastics, gender studies and linguistics (SFL- Systemic Functional Linguistics, and CL- Critical Linguistics informed by SFG (Systemic Functional Grammar)) for theoretical underpinnings, that there is a dialectical relationship between the way Darko names her male characters and her authorial ideology. In fact, he establishes in this study that the way Darko names her male characters as well as the roles and activities she assigns to them is teleologically meant to downgrade, deflate, and bash the male image, which points out clearly her ardent desire to deconstruct the patriarchal status quo in contemporary African literature.

Koussouhon and Dossoumou (2015a) draw on the grammar of Ideational/Experiential Metafunction and the Womanist theory to explore the emerging perception of gender identity in contemporary African literature. They use Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* (2011) to underscore this observation. The analysis of the experiential structure of the language of the two selected extracts shows the writer's support for the re-presentation and redefinition of African women's personality and identity in literature. This apprehension is further enriched with the Womanist theoretical praxis. Koussouhon and Dossoumou (2014) also carry out a lexicogrammatical analysis of Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* (2006). The article focuses on the experiential and textual structures of the language of two extracts drawn from the novel. In the study, the scholars show how the writer organizes language to encode her experience (or fictional reality). The study reveals that the



ideology sustaining *Yellow-Yellow* is oriented towards building a sound, social, environment-friendly and judicial model that ensures fairness, equity and transparency in the Niger Delta region (Nigeria). In another paper, Koussouhon and Dossoumou (2015b) study the interpersonal structure of the language of a lengthy extract drawn from the same fiction. In fact, they analyze the interpersonal meaning of the extract through Mood and Modality from Critical Discourse and Womanist perspective. With this eclectic approach, the researchers establish that Agary's fiction through the characters (male and female) and its multifaceted thematic concerns is underpinned by an authorial ideology geared towards a pro-women social change for a more balanced African society.

Koutchadé and Mehouéno (2016) study the tenor of discourse and Interpersonal dimension of Akachi Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Ones* (2006) through Mood, Modality and Vocatives. The analysis pinpoints how the language of two extracts drawn from the fiction encodes relations between male and female characters. In the study, the scholars engage in the ongoing debate on the ontological relationship between language and gender. They show how the language of the fiction enacts gender, how the characters (male and female) employ language resources to define or/and represent themselves and others. Also, they show how the discourse of women mainly encodes patriarchal oppression and its deconstruction as well.

The current study is similar to the works reviewed above in that it draws on the Hallidayan perspective. But it is different from the above in that it applies the Hallidayan theory to a new corpus- *Mema* (a new contemporary novel by a writer of French expression called Daniel Mengara), and attempts to bring some of Judith Butler's theoretical insights to bear on the discussion and interpretation of the findings drawn from the analysis. In fact, *Mema* (2003) has been studied recently from gender, feminist and queer theoretical perspectives (see Allagbé and Allagbé, 2015) and multidimensional approach to women's empowerment and Womanist theoretical viewpoints (see Capo-Chichi, Allagbé and Allagbé, 2016). Though these studies prove to be very scholarly insightful, they are actually not linguistics-based, and that is the gap this research aims to fill in. The argument here is that the linguistic study of the work at hand will provide an analysis and interpretation that will go beyond the impressionistic and subjective reading characteristic of most literary research endeavours. Before proving this argument empirically, we would first like to throw some light on the theoretical constructs used here.

### 3. Theoretical Constructs

This paper draws on the two constructs of Modality and Transitivity for theoretical underpinnings. Modality and Transitivity are drawn from the Hallidayan brand of linguistics called Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Halliday (cited in Eggins, 1994:154) describes Mood as "the grammar of the clause as exchange". It is generally considered as the grammatical structure that encodes the Interpersonal Meaning or Metafunction (Eggins, 1994/2004), which is exclusively concerned with the enactment of social processes (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). Modality is one of the three systematic ramifications of Mood (Mood, Modality and Adjunct).

The term 'modality' is used by Simpson (1993:47) to indicate a speaker's/writer's/narrator's attitude towards and opinions about the events and situations around him/her. To Fowler (1986:131), it means "the grammar of explicit comment, the means by which people express their degree of commitment to the truth of the propositions they utter, and their views on the desirability or otherwise of the states of affairs referred to". Drawing on the foregoing definitions, Koutchadé and Mehouénu (2016: 170) contend that "Modality refers to how speakers and writers take up a position, express an opinion, a point of view or make a judgment. It also expresses the degree of certainty and truth of statements about the world." Given the interpersonal dimension of modality, Koussouhon and Dossoumou (2015b) hold that it colours a speaker's/writer's/narrator's language or discourse. It follows from this to note that modality serves to encode a speaker's/writer's/narrator's attitude, point of view, ideology, etc., in/towards what s/he says, writes or narrates. However, modality "can be a difficult meaning to capture [...]" (Fontaine, 2013:120) in any piece of language use. Hence, it is advisable that the analyst of such a piece resort to the surrounding context within which modality is used in order to determine the intended meaning of the speaker/writer/narrator.

There are two types of modality: epistemic and deontic. Epistemic modality, called modalization in SFL terms, indicates a kind of connotative meaning relating to the degree of certainty the speaker/writer wants to express about what s/he is saying or the estimation of probability associated to what is being said (Fontaine, 2013: 121). Deontic modality, called modulation in SFL terms, also indicates a kind of connotative meaning but, in contrast to epistemic modality, it relates to obligation or permission, including willingness and ability (Fontaine, 2013: 121). Modality is expressed by modal auxiliary verbs (e.g. can, could, shall, should, may, might,



will, would, etc.), lexical items (usually adverbs such as probably, luckily, etc.) or groups which function as modal adjuncts (e.g. by all means, at all cost, etc.). Fowler (1986) (cited in Koussouhon and Amoussou, 2015: 280) contends that an intense use of modulators (must, will, shall, ought to, need, certainly, etc.) denotes confidence and omniscience, whereas that of modalizers (may, might, perhaps, could, seem, as if, as though, apparently, seemed as if, looked as though, appeared as though, etc.) marks subjectivity, caution or partiality.

Eggs (1994:99) describes transitivity as the "description of clause as a representation of experience". Elsewhere, she describes it as the grammatical structure that accounts for how the clause is organized to realize Experiential Meaning or Metafunction. Hasan (1988: 63) (cited in Hubbard, 1999: 317) states that "Transitivity is concerned with a coding of the goings on: who does what in relation to whom/ what, where, when, how and why. Thus the analysis is in terms of some PROCESS, its PARTICIPANTS, and the CIRCUMSTANCES pertinent to the Process-Participant configuration." Halliday (1971:354) defines transitivity as "the set of options whereby the speaker encodes his [or her] experience of the processes of the external world, and of the internal world of his [or her] own consciousness, together with the participants in these processes and their attendant circumstances; and it embodies a very basic distinction of processes into two types, those that are regarded as due to an external cause, an agency other than the person or object involved, and those that are not."

It ensues from the foregoing that transitivity accounts for how a speaker/writer/narrator draws on language resources to encode the goings on or express his/her perception(s) of the external world and the internal world of his/her own consciousness (Bloor and Bloor, 2004). It also ensues from the foregoing that a speaker/writer/narrator encodes his/her experience via processes (material, mental, behavioural, verbal, relational and existential), participants (actor, goal and beneficiary, sayer and receiver, behavior and phenomenon, behavior and phenomenon, sayer, receiver and verbiage, carrier, attribute, token and value) and circumstances (extent, cause, location, matter, manner, role and accompaniment). Again, from the definition given by Halliday (1971), one can infer that transitivity embodies a very basic distinction of processes into two types, those that are regarded as due to an external cause, an agency other than the person or object involved, and those that are not. It is a commonly held view across the Hallidayan linguistic tradition that a transitivity analysis accounts or

can account for the implications of whether agency is foregrounded or not in a clause or whether agency acts upon something or not in a clause.

The feminist or/and queer scholar Judith Butler (1988, 1990/1999, 2004 and 2009) uses the term "agency" to denote gender identity. Gender, according to this scholar, refers to a performative act in a constant alteration. Gender is also considered as a social or cultural construct that is constituted by social norms (Allagbé and Allagbé, 2015) or prompted by obligatory norms to be one gender or the other (usually strictly between a binary frame) (Butler, 2009). The social or obligatory norms determine what is normative or legible for the two sex categories: male and female. Note that the reproduction of gender is always a negotiation of power (Butler, 2009) inherent in discourse that conditions agency into what is livable or what is un-livable. In fact, gender, as a construct, denounces the fixed or rigid categorization of people as male or female, theorizing thus the unstable nature of agency or gender identity in a social practice. In this way, it is right to assert that gender theorists advocate gender or/and sexual fluidity. This view of gender has been increasingly espoused by many a contemporary African prose writer (whether male or female). For instance, Allagbé and Allagbé's paper (2015) and Koussouhon and Agbachi's recent study (2016) confirm the presence of gender fluidity in contemporary African literature. It follows from this to argue that Butler's view of gender has come to stay in contemporary African literature; it has come to undo or disarticulate all the social norms that constrain gender, and construct and represent it as a strict or rigid binary frame into which society cogently classifies individuals.

Actually, there exists a complementarity between Modality and Transitivity in that both function on the lexicogrammatical axis to unveil agency or gender identity or/and the ideology underpinning it in a social practice. In fact, the argument held here is that a speaker's/writer's/narrator's choices in Modality and Transitivity can serve as indicators of such aspects as power, reality, status, attitudes, ideology, gender, etc. Also, Halliday's SFL theory and Butler's gender performative theory complement each other because there is no way one can decode aspects of meaning such as power, reality, status, attitudes, ideology, gender, etc., inherent in any social practice or discourse without having to make recourse to an effective, tested and proven analytic tool like SFL. Likewise, unraveling the way social norms condition what is judged livable or un-livable for gender and other related issues is not possible without Butler's concept "performativity", which views gender as *performance* (Koussouhon and Agbachi, 2016: 84). The next section



explores the discourses of masculinity and femininity encoded via the language of the novel.

#### **4. Practical Analyses of Discourses of Masculinity and Femininity in *Mema* (2003)**

As said earlier on, this study seeks to explore how the two facets of gender-masculinity and femininity- are enacted in a contemporary fictional text entitled *Mema* (2003). To reach this goal, some discourses wherein the gendered representations of the female protagonist, Ntsame Minlame (Mema) and her husband, Sima Okang (Pepa), Akoma and her husband, and Nkulanveng and his wife are highlighted are extracted from the novel. Whether the discourses are monologic or dialogic, long or short does not matter here, what does matter most here is the meaning they convey about gender as regards the aforementioned personae. There are eight (08) discourses altogether, and these discourses are numbered (D1 to D8, D stands for Discourse). These discourses are labeled according to their content or the meaning they convey, though an aspect of the content of one discourse can still be traced in that of another. The eight discourses are first described linguistically before the findings culled from them are duly discussed or/and presented.

##### **4.1. Modality and Transitivity Analyses of the Discourses of Masculinity and Femininity in the Novel.**

In SFL, the clause is considered as the unit of any lexicogrammatical analysis (Eggs, 1994/2004; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Bloor and Bloor, 2004 and Fontaine, 2013), and since Modality and Transitivity are situated on the lexicogrammatical axis, the eight (08) discourses under study here are first split into numerically numbered clauses. Then, the Modality and Transitivity features contained in the clauses are identified. The identification of the Modality and Transitivity features is realized according to the keys presented below. While this study clearly describes all the Transitivity features- process types, participants and circumstances- in the selected discourses, it only highlights the first two in the subsequent discussion. However, it is not useless to recall here that the presence of circumstances in any clause denotes the realization of experiential meanings related to the time, duration, place and manner of the process contained in the clause. Again, due to space, the discussion will revolve around the three most

predominant processes which will be determined by the aggregation of all the identified processes in the eight discourses.

Key:

Modality: Ms=Modalization, Ml=Modulation.

**Transitivity:** P=Process, Pm=material, Pme=mental, Pb=behavioural, Pv=verbal, Pe=existential, Pi=intensive, Pcc=circumstantial, Pp=possessive, Pc=causative. A=Actor, G=Goal, B=Beneficiary, R=Range S=Senser, Ph=Phenomenon. Sy=Sayer, Rv=Receiver, Vb=Verbiage. Be=Behaver, Bh=Behaviour. X=Existent. 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. Ag=Agent.

NB: It should be noted that all the processes in the discourses are in bold and the participants underlined. It should also be noted that all the embedded clauses are described.

(D1) *Discourse of an Unfailing Strength.*

1. I (S) know (Pme) 2. there are (Pe) things (X) in life (Cl) 3. that one (A) cannot (Ms) help (Pm). 4. The weight of years necessarily (A) took (Pm) its toll (G) on Mema (Cl). 5. That's how (At) life (Cr) is (Pi). 6. Things (A) must (Ms) come (Pm) 7. and go (Pm). 8. Trees (Cr) grow (Pi) tall (At), 9. then one day (Cl) the wind (A) blows (Pm) them (G) down (Cl). 10. A river (A) springs (Pm) from the bosom of the earth (Cl) 11. and nourishes (Pm) the lives of the fishes (G), 12. then it (A) dries out (Pm), [taking away (Pm) the lives (G) it (A) had created (Pm)] (Cm). 13. It (T) is (Pi) in the nature of things (Cl) 14. that the years (A) should (Ms) take (Pm) their toll (G). 15. But the years (A) did not vanquish (Pm) Mema (G), 16. because Mema (Cr) was (Pi) strong, a strong woman (At), indeed (p. 4).

(D2) *Discourse of Intelligence.*

1. Mema (Pr) had (Pi) a big mouth (Pd) too. 2. And when I (Sy) say (Pv) a big mouth ((Rv). 3. I (Sy) mean (Pv) 4. she (Pr) really had (Pi) a big mouth (Pd). 5. Not in the physical sense of the things (Cl) she (Sy) said (Pv), 6. and how she (Sy) said (Pv) them (Rv). 7. Somewhere in her heart (Cl), Mema (S) always (Cl) believed (Pme) 8. she (T) was (Pi) the most intelligent person (V) in the universe (Cl). 9. It (Cr) was (Pi) not easy (At) 10. to win (Pm) a debate (G) against her (Cx). 11. She (A) would (Ms) always (Cl) try to convince (Pm) others (G) 12. that she (Cr) was (Pi) right (At). 13. But she (Cr) was (Pi) never easily convinced (At) (p. 4).

(D3) *Discourse of Terror/Violence and Unconventional Demeanour.*

1. I (S) vaguely remember (Pme) those times (Ph) 2. when she (Pr) would (Ms) have (Pi) a dispute (Pd) with either her husband, my father, or other people (Cx) in the village (Cl). 3. The days following the dispute (T) would (Ms) always be (Pi) days filled with tension (V). 4. They (T) would (Ms) also be (Pi) days of apparent hatred (V) 5. during which Mema (A) would (Ms) adopt (Pm) a stubborn demeanour (G), [working (Pm) her way (G) silently throughout the hut and the village (Cm)] (Cm). 6. She (Sy) would not (Ms) speak to (Pv) anyone (Rv) 7. and nobody (Sy) would (Ms) dare to speak to (Pv) her (Rv). 8. When she (Cr) was (Pi) in such a mood (Cl), 9. even my father (S) could (Ms) not dare to approach (Pv) her (Rv) (p. 4).



(D4) Discourse of Pervasive Fear.

1. Of course (Cm), as was required (Pm) by our village customs (Cm), 2. when a member of the community (Cr) was (Pi) at odds (Cm) with another (Cm), 3. someone from among the most influential speakers in the village (A) had to attempt (Pm) a reconciliation (G). 4. It (Cr) did not matter (Pi) 5. whether the dispute (T) was (Pi) a private matter (V) between two villagers (Cm). 6. Something (G) had (Ml) to be done (Pm). 7. But the task of reconciling estranged parties (Cr) was (Pi) particularly daunting (At) 8. when Mema (G) was involved (Pm). 9. The person [secretly appointed (Pm) by the village (Cm) [to act (Pm) as a mediator (Co)] (Cc)] (Sy) would have (Ms) to approach (Pv) her (Rv) with extreme caution and expert tact, for fear of my mother's mouth (Cm). 10. Everybody (S) knew (Pme) her mouth (Ph). 11. Everybody (S) knew (Pme) 12. that her mouth (T) could (Ms) become (Pi) a terrible weapon (V) 13. if caused to start spitting out (Pm) words (G) like bullets (Cm) (p. 5).

(D5) Discourse of Oral Dexterity and Female Power.

1. My mother (T) was (Pi) a good speaker (V). 2. Like all the village people who (A) mastered (Pm) the art of speech (G), 3. she (A) always (Cl) began (Pm) her talks (G) with a tale or a proverb (Cm) 4. that (Cr) was (Pi) appropriate (At) for the particular situation (Cc). 5. And since my mother (Pr) had (Pi) a tale or a proverb (Pd) for all situations (Cc) 6. in which (Cl) she (G) was involved (Pm), 7. I (S) believe (Pme) 8. she herself (T) was (Pi) a treasure of tales and proverbs (V) (p. 7).

(D6) Discourse of Female Empowerment and Male Disempowerment.

1. Mema (Cr), [I (S) hear (Pme)], was (Pi) so unlike my father (At). 2. Pepa. 3. My father. 4. Who (V) was (Pi) he (T) really (Cm)? 5. I (S) do not know (Pme). 6. I (S) did not really (Cm) know (Pme) my father (Ph). 7. He (A) joined (Pm) the ancestors (G) 8. long before I (S) became fully aware of (Pme) the things happening (Ph) around me (Cl). 9. So I (Pr) have (Pi) a faint memory (Pd) 10. of what he (Cr) could (Ms) have been (Pi) like (At). 11. [All (Ph) I (S) know (Pme) of him (Cm)] (T) is (Pi) what (V) 12. Mema and other people (Sy) told (Pv) me (Rv). 13. The story (A) went (Pm) 14. that Pepa (T) was (Pi) a very calm and placid man (V) with no real manly power (Cm) in our household (Cl). 15. My mother, [her critics (Sy) said (Pv)] (A), ran (Pm) every single thing (G) in the hut (Cl) with a heavy hand, and a big mouth (Cm). 16. Pepa, [I (Rv) was told (Pv)] (G), had been turned (Pm) into a mere woman (Cm) in his own hut (Cl). 17. He (T) had become (Pi) an empty shell (V). 18. A soundless tom-tom (V). 19. A lion with broken legs who (A) could (Ms) no longer bounce (Pm) 20. and pounce (Pm). 21. He (Ph) was thought of (Pme) as someone (Co) [so subdued and bewildered by the power (Cm) wielded by his wife (Cm) inside and outside the hut (Cl)] (Cm) 22. that his voice (Ph) was never heard (Pme) [rising above that of the panther of a woman] (Cm) 23. that people (Sy) called (Pv) his wife (Rv). 24. This (Cr) was not (Pi) normal (At), 25. people (Sy) said (Pv). 26. This woman (A) must (Ms) have used (Pm) witchcraft (G) [to subdue (Pm) her husband (G)] (Cc). 27. It (Cr) was (Pi) customary (At), [they (Sy) said (Pv)], [for women (Cc) to use (Pm) witchcraft (G) [to control (Pm) their husbands' will (G) in order to prevent (Pm) them (G) from looking at other women or marrying themselves a second wife (Cc)] (Cc)]. 28. They (A) would (Ms), for example, put (Pm) strange things (G) in their foods (Cl) and under the conjugal bed (Cl). 29. These things (A) would (Ms) then slowly take over (Pm) the manhood and will of the husband (G), 30. who (Cr) would (Ms) become (Pi) docile (At). 31. If the husband (A) dared to go (Pm) to another woman (Cl), 32. his manhood (A) would (Ms) refuse to stand up to perform (Pm) its duties (G). 33. It (A) would (Ms) stand (Pm) 34. only when used (Pm) with the woman (Cm) 35. who

(A)controlled (Pm) it (G) with witchcraft (Cm). 36. So, according to the gossip, there was (Pe) no doubt (X) about it (Ct). 37. My mother (A)had turned (Pm) my father (G) into a mere empty calabash (Cm) [using witchcraft] (Cm) (p. 32-33).

(D7) *Discourse of Insubordination and War.*

1. 'Ah Akoma, my beloved wife, since when doyou (A)serve (Pm) me (B)food (G) without water (Cm)?' 'Ah! 2. You (S)think (Pme) 3. I (T)am (Pi) your slave (V)? 4. I (S)do not remember (Pme) 5. my father (Sy)telling (Pv) you (Rv), 6. when you (A)paid (Pm) the marriage n'sua (G) to my people (Cl) fifteen mimbuh ago (Cl), 7. that he (A)had sold (Pm) me (G) to you (Cl) as a slave (Co). 8. If you (S)want (Pme) water (Ph) 9. to drink (Pm), 10. go (Pm) 11. and get (Pm) your water (G) yourself. 12. Don'tyou (Pr)have (Pi) two legs (Pd) like me (Cm)? 13. Besides, you (A)are sitting (Pm) closer to the water pot (Cl) 14. than I (A) am (Pm)." 15. Faced with this womanly assault, the man (A)would (Ms) simply shut up (Pm) 16. and look (Pm), speechless and overwhelmed, at this woman of his 17. who (A)had obviously (Cm) elected (Pm) 18. to turn (Pm) his life (G) into a living hell (Cl) (p. 16).

(D8) *Discourse of Reminiscence of Love Declaration, Sisterhood or Political Solidarity and Threat.*

1. 'Ah Nkulanveng, my husband, I (Pr)have (Pi) a question (Pd) for you (Cc), 2. and I (A)need (Pm) an answer (G) now (Cl). 3. Do you (S) really (Cm) love (Pme) me (Ph)?' 4. 'Of course (Cm), my wife, I (S)love (Pme) you (Ph). 5. Isn't (Pi) that (T) 6. what I (Sy)told (Pv) you (Rv) the day (Cl) 7. when I (S)saw (Pme) you (Ph) for the first time (Cc)?' 8. Yes, I (S)remember (Pme). 9. I (S)remember (Pme) 10. that you (T)were (Pi) a constant visitor (V) to my village (Cl) 11. because you (Pr)had (Pi) friends (Pd) there (Cl) 12. with whom (Cm) you (A)used (Ms) to go (Pm) monkey-hunting (G). 13. 'Owé. 14. But monkey-hunting (T)was (Pi) just (Cm) a pretext (V) 15. that (A)allowed (Pm) me (G) 16. to see (Pme) you (Ph) 17. as often as I (S)could (Ms) (Pme). 18. But I (Cr)had (Ml) to be (Pi) careful (At) [not to approach (Pv) you (Rv) openly (Cm)] (Cc), 19. because at that time a young man and a young woman (G)were not allowed (Pm) 20. to see (Pme) each other (Ph) secretly (Cm) 21. or even to talk (Pv) openly (Cm) to each other without the presence of elders (Cl). 22. [All I (A) could (Ms) (Pm)] (T)was (Pi) [to watch (Pb) you (Ph) from afar (Cl)] (V) 23. and let my heart (G)throb (Pm) frantically (Cm) in my chest (Cl) 24. because of the love it (S)felt (Pme) for you (Cc). 25. 'So you (A)took advantage of (Pm) the fact (G) 26. that you and I (Pr)had (Pi) the chance (Pd) 27. to meet (Pm) during the wrestling contest (Cl) 28. that (G)was held (Pm) in your village (Cl). 29. You (A)lured (Pm) me (G) away from my parents (Cl) 30. who (Cr)were (Pi) too busy (At) [watching (Pb) the sweating wrestlers (Ph) [to pay attention to (Pm) [what (G)I (S)was doing (Pm)] (G)] (Cc). 31. You (A)lured (Pm) me (G) into following you behind a hut (Cm). 32. 'Owé. 33. And it (T)was (Pi) there (V) 34. I (Sy)told (Pv) you (Rv) 35. that I (S)loved (Pme) you (Ph) for the first time (Cc). 36. 'Owé. 37. I (S)remember (Pme). 38. I (S)remember (Pme) [the joy (Ph) I (S) felt (Pme)] (Ph) 39. and the throbs (G)my heart (A)gave (Pm) me (B) 40. when you (Sy)told (Pv) me (Rv)this (Vb). 41. I (Sy)told (Pv) you (Rv) 42. that I (S)loved (Pme) you (Ph) too.' 43. 'And I (Sy)said (Pv): 44. "If it (Cr)is (Pi) true (At) 45. that your heart (A)is throbbing (Pm) for me (Cc), 46. then I (A)will (Ml) come to visit (Pm) you (G) in your village (Cl). 47. Do you (S)agree (Pme)?' 48. "[I (A) agree (Pme),"] (T)was (Pi) my answer (V). 49. After our secret encounter, I (S)heard (Pme) the cock (Ph) 50. crow (Pm) three times one morning after the other (Cm), 51. and there (V)you (T)were (Pi) with your people (Cm). 52. You (A)had come (Pm) 53. to ask (Pv) me



(Rv)[to leave (Pm) my parents (G) and become (Pi) one of yours (V)] (Vb). 54. Two full moons later (Cl), I (A)moved (Pm) into your village (Cl) [to become (Pi) your wife (V)] (Cc).’ 55. ‘Those (T)were (Pi) good times (V).’ 56. ‘Owé. 57. Good times (V), indeed (Cm). 58. But [what I (Sy) am asking (Pv) you (Rv) now (Cl)] (T)is (Pi) this (V): 59. do you (S) really (Cm) love (Pme) me (Ph)? 60. Do you (S) still love (Pme) me (Ph) 61. the way you (Sy)said (Pv) 62. you (S)loved (Pme) me (Ph) during that day (Cl) 63. when we (A)met (Pm) behind the hut (Cl) 64. and exchanged (Pm) words of love (G) for the first time (Cc)?’ 65. ‘My ancestors (T)are (Pi) my witnesses (V) 66. that I (S) still love (Pme) you (Ph) so.’ 67. ‘If you (S)love (Pme) me (Ph) [like you (Sy)say (Pv)] (Cm), 68. why haveyou (Sy)not told (Pv) all the husbands of this village (Rv)[to go (Pm) and fetch (Pm) Ntutume’s wife (G)] (Vb)? 69. It (T)has now (Cl) been (Pi) moons almost as many as the fingers on both of my hands (V), 70. and no one (A)has budged (Pm) a finger (G) [to go (Pm) and get (Pm) her (G) back] (Cc). 71. Is (Pi) that (T)[the way you (A) show (Pm) love (G) for me (Cc)] (V)? 72. ‘But, woman ... Biloghe (T)is not (Pi) my wife (V). 73. If it (T)were (Pi) you (V) 74. who (A)had gone (Pm), 75. you (S)know (Pme) 76. I (A)would (Ms) have got (Pm) you (G) back very quickly (Cm).’ 77. ‘Nonsense! 78. When didfamily problems (T)become (Pi) one man’s problems in this village (V)? 79. You (S)know (Pme) perfectly well (Cm) 80. that it (T)is (Pi) everybody’s duty (V) in this village (Cl) [to go (Pm) and tryto get (Pm) Ntutume’s wife (G) back from her people (Cl)] (Cc).’ 81. ‘You (Cr)are (Pi) right (At), woman, but ...’ 82. ‘There is (Pe) no “but” (X). 83. Why doyou (A)insist on insulting (Pm) me (G)? 84. You (Sy) just said (Pv) 85. you (S)loved (Pme) me (Ph), 86. didyou (Sy)not (Pv)? 87. The question (T)is (Pi): 88. would (Ms) you (A)have waited (Pm) this long (Cx) 89. before coming (Pm) to my village (Cl) [to beg (Pm) me (G) back] (Cc)?’ 90. ‘No ... but ...’ 91. ‘[What (Ph) I (S) see (Pme)] (T)is (Pi) that (V) 92. all the males (Cr) in this village (Cl)have been (Pi) very silent and inactive (At) 93. since Biloghe (A)left (Pm). 94. No one (A), so far, has tried to get (Pm) the village (G) [to go (Pm) and beg (Pm) her (G) back] (Cc). 95. So, do not lie (Pm) to me (Cl). 96. This (V)is (Pi) exactly 97. what (G)you (A)would (Ms) have done (Pm) 98. if it (T)were (Pi) me (V) 99. who (A)had left (Pm). 100. You (A)would (Ms) have made (Pm) no attempt (G) [to go(Pm) and beg(Pm) me (G) back] (Cc). 101. Is (Pi) this (T)the way (V) 102. you (A)show (Pm) love (G) for your women in this place (Cc)? 103. ‘Woman mine, it (T)is not (Pi) I (V) 104. who (Sy)will (Ms) say (Pv) that (Vb) 105. [what you (Sy) have said (Pv)] (Cr)is not (Pi) true (At). 106. I (S)understand (Pme) [what (Vb) you (Sy) are saying (Pv)] (Ph). 107. Let me (Ph)think (Pme) about it (Ct).’ 108. ‘Owé. 109. You (S)had better think (Pme) about it (Ct) fast (Cm). 110. For I (Pr)have had (Pi) enough of your nonsense (Pd). 111. So, today (Cl), I (Sy)will (Ms) say (Pv) this (Vb), 112. and my dead people (T)are (Pi) my witnesses (V): 113. think (Pme) about it (Ct) 114. before I (S)decide (Pme) 115. that it (T)is (Pi) also time (V) [for me (Cc) to leave (Pm) this village (G)] (Cc). 116. Do (Pm) something (G) 117. before we, women of this village (S), decide (Pme) 118. that it (Cr)is not (Pi) worthwhile staying in a village such as this one (At) 119. that (A)does not care enough about (Pm) the wives (G) 120. it (A)marries (Pm).’ (p. 16-18).

The tables below present the number of clauses and the distribution of Modality and Transitivity features in each discourse.

Discourse Number	Number of Clauses
1	16
2	13
3	09
4	13
5	08
6	37
7	18
8	120
Total	234

Table 1: Number of clauses in each discourse.

Modality Type	Modalization		Modulation		Total
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
D1	04	100	00	00	04
D2	01	100	00	00	01
D3	07	100	00	00	07
D4	02	66.66	01	33.33	03
D5	00	00	00	00	00
D6	08	100	00	00	08
D7	01	100	00	00	01
D8	09	81.81	02	18.18	11

Table 2: Distribution of Modality features in each discourse.

Process Type	Material		Mental		Behavioural		Verbal		Relational		Existential		Total
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
D1	12	66.66	01	05.55	00	00	00	00	04	22.22	01	05.55	18
D2	02	15.38	01	07.69	00	00	04	30.76	06	46.15	00	00	13
D3	02	20	01	10	00	00	03	30	04	40	00	00	10
D4	05	38.46	03	23.07	00	00	01	07.69	04	30.76	00	00	13
D5	03	37.50	01	12.50	00	00	00	00	04	50	00	00	08
D6	19	44.18	07	16.27	00	00	06	13.95	10	23.25	01	02.32	43
D7	12	57.14	03	14.28	00	00	01	04.76	02	09.52	00	00	21
D8	51	36.17	32	22.69	01	0.70	18	12.76	38	26.95	01	0.70	141

Table 3: Distribution of Transitivity features in each discourse.



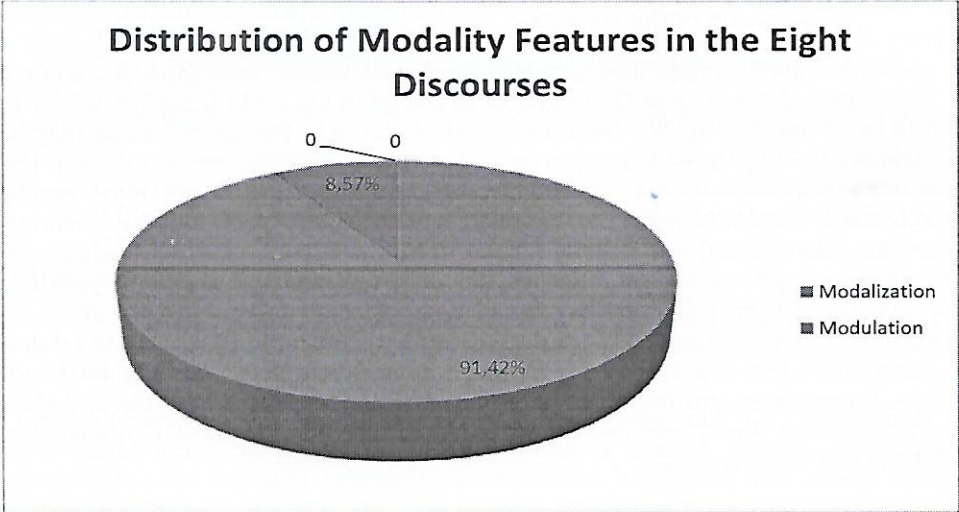


Figure 1: Distribution of Modality features in the eight discourses.

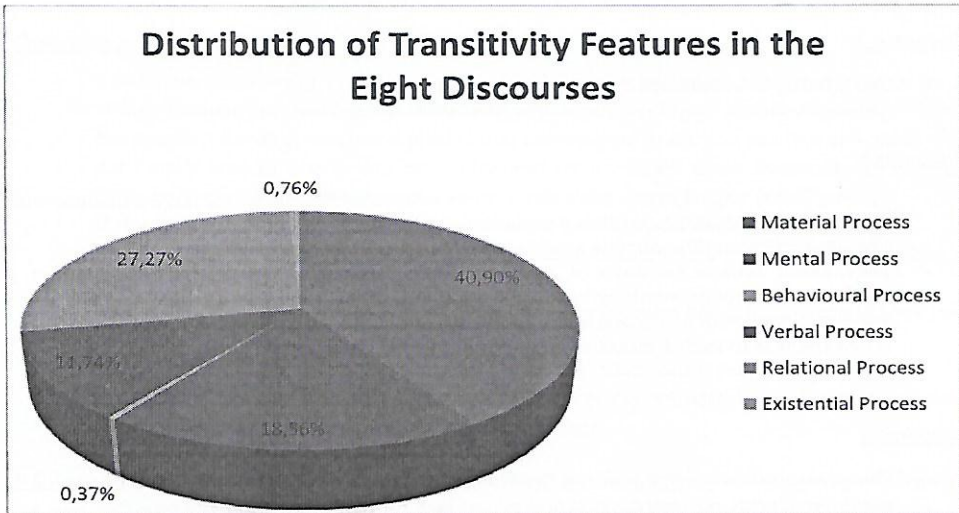


Figure 2: Distribution of Modality features in the eight discourses.

## 4.2. Discussion of the Findings.

The analyses above exude that the eight discourses under consideration contain a total number of 234 clauses (16 in D1, 13 in D2, 09 in D3, 13 in D4, 08 in D5, 37 in D6, 18 in D7 and 120 in D8). The analyses of Modality in the discourses display 32 selections (91.42%) in modalization and 03 instances (08.57%) in modulation. The selections in modalization are encoded in such modal verbs as *can*, *must*, *should*, *would*, *could*, *used and will*. These modal operators are used by the narrator-character (Elang Sima) and Nkulanveng and his wife to encode their judgments, opinions, perceptions, biases, attitudes, etc., in the discourses. Specifically, in D1, D2, D3, D4, D6 and D7, the narrator-character (Elang Sima) draws on these operators to express a certain degree of certainty, probability and usuality related to other characters like Mema (his mother), Pepa (his father), Akoma's husband, things, happenings and life at large. For illustration, consider how the narrator-character (Elang Sima) intrudes on his message with the italicized modalizers in D1, D2, D3, D4, D6 and D7:

### Discourse 1

- I (Elang Sima) know that there are things in life one *cannot* help.
- Things *must* come and go.
- It is in the nature of things that the years *should* take their toll.

### Discourse 2

- She (Mema) *would* always try to convince others.

### Discourse 3

- I (Elang Sima) vaguely remember those times when she (Mema) *would* have a dispute with her husband, my father, or other people in the village.
- The days following the dispute *would* always be days filled with tension.
- They *would* always be days of apparent hatred during which Mema *would* adopt a stubborn demeanour, working her way throughout the hut and the village.
- She *would* not speak to anyone and nobody *would* dare to speak to her.
- When she was in such a mood, even my father *would* not dare to approach her.

### Discourse 4

- The person secretly appointed by the village to act as a mediator *would* have to approach her (Mema) with extreme caution and expert tact, for fear of my mother's mouth.
- Everybody knew that her (Mema's) mouth *could* become a terrible weapon.

### Discourse 6

- So I (Elang Sima) have a faint memory of what he (Pepa) *could* have been like.



- A lion with broken legs who *could* no longer bounce and pounce.
- This woman *must* have used witchcraft to subdue her husband.
- They (women) *would*, for example, put strange things in their (husbands') foods and the conjugal bed.
- These things *would* then slowly take over the manhood and will of the husband who would become docile.
- If the husband dared to go to another woman, his manhood *would* refuse to stand up to perform its duties.
- It (the husband's manhood) *would* stand only when (it was) used with the woman who controlled with witchcraft.

#### Discourse 7

- Faced with this womanly assault, the man *would* simply shut up and look, speechless and overwhelmed, at this woman of his who had obviously elected to turn his life into a living hell.

Like the narrator-character (Elang Sima), Nkulanveng and his wife employ the above-mentioned auxiliary verbs to express a certain degree of certainty, probability and usuality related to each other's behaviour and men's inaction towards Biloghe's departure from the village. Consider how they do this in what follows suit:

#### Discourse 8

- I (Nkulanveng's wife) remember that you (Nkulanveng) were a constant visitor to my village because you had friends there with whom you *used* to go monkey-hunting.
- But monkey-hunting was just a pretext that allowed me to see you as often as I *could*.
- All I *could* was to watch you from afar and let my heart throb frantically in my chest because of the love it felt for you.
- If it were you who had gone, you know I *would* have got you back very quickly.
- The question is: *would* you have waited this long before coming to my village to beg me back?
- This is exactly what you *would* have done if it were me who had left. You *would* have made no attempt to go and beg me back.
- Woman mine, it is not I who *will* say that what you have said is not true.
- So, today, I *will* say this, and my dead people are my witnesses: think about it before I decide that it is also time for me to leave this village.

The 03 instances of modulation in the discourses are realized by such modulators as *had to* and *will*. The narrator-character (Elang Sima) employs the modulator *had to* in D4 to highlight the regulatory role the community plays both in individual or private affairs or issues and interpersonal or social relationships. This role is neither optional nor negotiable. It is obligatory. Nkulanveng uses the modal

operator *had to* in D8 to encode his being obliged to comply with socially established norms. He also uses the modal *will* in the same discourse to express a dual meaning. First, Nkulanveng uses the modal verb *will* to encode a future action; an action that will take place in the future on a condition. The presence of the conjunction *if* in the preceding clause clearly points out that the action encoded in the modal auxiliary *will* is only possible if a certain condition is met. The second meaning that one can infer from this modal is **strong desire** and **will, good faith** or simply **promise**. Nkulanveng, by using the auxiliary in his conversation with his now-wife but then-fiancée, seeks to foreground a strong desire or a promise therein.

#### Discourse 4

- Something *had to* be done.

#### Discourse 8

- But I (Nkulanveng) *had to* be careful not to approach you openly, because at that time a young man and a young woman were not allowed to see each other secretly or even to talk openly to each other without the presence of elders.
- If it is true that your heart is throbbing for me, then I *will* come to visit you in your village.

All the aforementioned observations are also pinpointed by the transitivity analyses. The analyses reveal that the eight discourses include 264 processes: 108 material processes (40.90%), 49 mental processes (18.56%), 01 behavioural process (00.37%), 31 verbal processes (11.74%), 72 relational processes (27.27%) and 03 existential processes (01.13%). As it is obvious in the foregoing, material processes are the most dominant process type. The dominance of this process type denotes that the eight discourses are concerned with concrete, real and tangible actions. Here are all or some of the material processes identified in the eight discourses, the processes are in bold:

#### Discourse 1

- I (Elang Sima) know that there are things in life one **cannot help**.
- The weight of years necessarily took its toll on Mema.
- Things **must come and go**.
- Trees grow tall, then one day the wind blows them down.
- A river **springs** from the bosom of the earth and **nourishes** the lives of the fishes, then it **dries out**, taking away the lives it **had created**.
- It is in the nature of things that the years **should take** their toll.
- But the years **did not vanish** Mema.

#### Discourse 2

- It was not easy to **win** a debate against her.
- She (Mema) **would always try to convince** others.



### Discourse 3

- They *would* always be days of apparent hatred during which Mema **would adopt** a stubborn demeanour, **working** her way throughout the hut and the village.

### Discourse 4

- Of course, as (it) **was required** by our village customs ...
- Someone from among the most influential speakers in the village **had to attempt** a reconciliation.
- Something **had to be done**.
- But the task of reconciling estranged parties was particularly daunting when Mema **was involved**.
- Everybody knew that her (Mema's) mouth could be a terrible weapon if (it **was**) caused to **start spitting out** words like bullets.

### Discourse 5

- Like all the village people who **mastered** the art of speech, she (Mema) always **began** her talks with a tale or a proverb.
- And since my mother had a tale or a proverb for all situations in which she **was involved**...

### Discourse 6

- He (Pepa) **joined** the ancestors ...
- The story went ... My mother **ran** every single thing in the hut with a heavy hand and a big mouth.
- Pepa ... **had been turned** into a mere woman in his own hut.
- A lion with broken legs who **could no longer bounce and pounce**.
- This woman **must have used** witchcraft to **subdue** her husband.
- They (women) **would, for example, put** strange things in their (husbands') foods and the conjugal bed.
- These things **would then slowly take over** the manhood and will of the husband who **would become docile**.
- If the husband **dared to go** to another woman, his manhood **would refuse to stand up to perform** its duties.
- It (the husband's manhood) **would stand** only when (it **was**) used with the woman who controlled with witchcraft.

### Discourse 7

- Ah Akoma, my beloved wife, since when **do you serve** me food without water?
- I do not remember my father telling you, when you **paid** the marriage *n'sua* to my people fifteen *mimbuh* ago, that he **had sold** me to you as a slave.
- If you want water **to drink, go and get** your water yourself.
- Besides, you're **sitting** closer to the water pot than I **am (sitting)**.
- Faced with this womanly assault, the man **would simply shut up and look**, speechless and overwhelmed, at this woman of his who **had obviously elected to turn** his life into a living hell.

operator *had to* in D8 to encode his being obliged to comply with socially established norms. He also uses the modal *will* in the same discourse to express a dual meaning. First, Nkulanveng uses the modal verb *will* to encode a future action; an action that will take place in the future on a condition. The presence of the conjunction *if* in the preceding clause clearly points out that the action encoded in the modal auxiliary *will* is only possible if a certain condition is met. The second meaning that one can infer from this modal is **strong desire** and **will, good faith** or simply **promise**. Nkulanveng, by using the auxiliary in his conversation with his now-wife but then-fiancée, seeks to foreground a strong desire or a promise therein.

#### Discourse 4

- Something *had to* be done.

#### Discourse 8

- But I (Nkulanveng) *had to* be careful not to approach you openly, because at that time a young man and a young woman were not allowed to see each other secretly or even to talk openly to each other without the presence of elders.
- If it is true that your heart is throbbing for me, then I *will* come to visit you in your village.

All the aforementioned observations are also pinpointed by the transitivity analyses. The analyses reveal that the eight discourses include 264 processes: 108 material processes (40.90%), 49 mental processes (18.56%), 01 behavioural process (00.37%), 31 verbal processes (11.74%), 72 relational processes (27.27%) and 03 existential processes (01.13%). As it is obvious in the foregoing, material processes are the most dominant process type. The dominance of this process type denotes that the eight discourses are concerned with concrete, real and tangible actions. Here are all or some of the material processes identified in the eight discourses, the processes are in bold:

#### Discourse 1

- I (Elang Sima) know that there are things in life one **cannot help**.
- The weight of years necessarily took its toll on Mema.
- Things **must come** and **go**.
- Trees grow tall, then one day the wind blows them down.
- A river **springs** from the bosom of the earth and **nourishes** the lives of the fishes, then it **dries out, taking away** the lives it **had created**.
- It is in the nature of things that the years **should take** their toll.
- But the years **did not vanquish** Mema.

#### Discourse 2

- It was not easy **to win** a debate against her.
- She (Mema) **would always try to convince** others.



Discourse 3

- They *would* always be days of apparent hatred during which Mema **would adopt** a stubborn demeanour, **working** her way throughout the hut and the village.

Discourse 4

- Of course, as (it) **was required** by our village customs ...
- Someone from among the most influential speakers in the village **had to attempt** a reconciliation.
- Something **had to be done**.
- But the task of reconciling estranged parties was particularly daunting when Mema **was involved**.
- Everybody knew that her (Mema's) mouth could be a terrible weapon if (it was) **caused to start spitting out words like bullets**.

Discourse 5

- Like all the village people who **mastered** the art of speech, she (Mema) always **began** her talks with a tale or a proverb.
- And since my mother had a tale or a proverb for all situations in which she **was involved**...

Discourse 6

- He (Pepa) **joined** the ancestors ...
- The story went ... My mother **ran** every single thing in the hut with a heavy hand and a big mouth.
- Pepa ... **had been turned** into a mere woman in his own hut.
- A lion with broken legs who **could no longer bounce and pounce**.
- This woman **must have used** witchcraft to **subdue** her husband.
- They (women) **would, for example, put** strange things in their (husbands') foods and the conjugal bed.
- These things **would then slowly take over** the manhood and will of the husband who **would become docile**.
- If the husband **dared to go** to another woman, his manhood **would refuse to stand up to perform** its duties.
- It (the husband's manhood) **would stand** only when (it was) **used** with the woman who controlled with witchcraft.

Discourse 7

- Ah Akoma, my beloved wife, since when **do you serve** me food without water?
- I do not remember my father telling you, when you **paid** the marriage *n'suu* to my people fifteen *mimbuh* ago, that he **had sold** me to you as a slave.
- If you want water **to drink, go and get** your water yourself.
- Besides, you're **sitting** closer to the water pot than I **am (sitting)**.
- Faced with this womanly assault, the man **would simply shut up and look**, speechless and overwhelmed, at this woman of his who **had obviously elected to turn** his life into a living hell.

### Discourse 8

- I (Nkulanveng's wife) remember that you (Nkulanveng) were a constant visitor to my village because you had friends there with whom you **used to go** monkey-hunting.
- But monkey-hunting was just a pretext that **allowed** me to see you as often as I could.
- All I **could** was to watch you from afar and let my heart **throb** frantically in my chest because of the love it felt for you.
- If it were you who **had gone**, you know I **would have got** you back very quickly.
- The question is: **would you have waited** this long before **coming** to my village to beg me back?
- This is exactly what you **would have done** if it were me who **had left**. You **would have made** no attempt to go and beg me back.
- So, today, I will say this, and my dead people are my witnesses: think about it before I decide that it is also time for me to leave this village.

As it appears in the sample clauses above, the actions in the eight discourses are realized by both animate and inanimate participants, while some of these actions are in the active voice, others are passivized. For instance, in D1, almost all the actions are realized by inanimate participants. There is only one animate participant in D1 that is foregrounded as Actor: *one* in (3). The other inanimate participants are *The weight of years* in (4), *Things* in (6 and 7), *the wind* in (9), *A river* in (10, 11 and 12a, b and c) and *the years* in (14 and 15). In addition to this observation, only one conscious participant is foregrounded as Goal in D1: *Mema* in (15). The other unconscious Goals are *its toll* in (4), *them (trees)* in (9), *the lives of the fishes* in (11), *the lives* in (12b) and *their toll* in (14). In D2, the two action verbs are also employed by conscious subjects: *anyone* in (10) and *Mema* in (11). Note that the subject *anyone* in (10) is not given explicitly in the clause but implied. It should also be noted that this implied subject has to be preceded by the preposition *for*. In fact, the implied subject is located in a projected clause, as in: "It (Cr) **was not** (Pi) easy (At) // (*for anyone*) **to win** (Pm) a debate (G) against her (Cx)". Unlike the subject role which is played by conscious beings, the object role is realized by both animate and inanimate participants: *a debate* in (10) and *others* in (11). Similarly, in D3, the two actions are performed by a conscious participant: *Mema* in (5). The Goal role is encoded in inanimate participants: *a stubborn demeanour* and *her way*. In D4, four of the action verbs are passivized (1, 6, 8 and 13). This means that the Goal in these clauses is moved from its initial slot to the Actor slot and vice versa. In other words, the Goal is emphasized, while the Actor is de-emphasized. The emphasized Goals in the clauses are encoded in both animate and inanimate subjects: *it* (implied) in (1), *Something* in (6), *Mema* in (8) and *Mema's mouth* (implied) in (13). The de-emphasized Actors in the clauses are *our village customs* in (1), *us* (implied) in (6), *the task of reconciling two estranged parties* in (implied) (8) and *them* (implied) in (13). The Actor role in the only active material clause (3) in D4 is played by a conscious participant: *Someone from among the most influential speakers in the village* in (3). The Goal in this clause is inanimate: *a reconciliation*.



Just like in D4, two out of the action verbs in D5 are in the active voice (2 and 3) and are all realized by conscious subjects: *Like all the village people who* in (2) and *she (Memu)* in (3). By contrast, the Goals in these active material clauses are realized only by unconscious participants: *the art of speech* in (2) and *her talks* in (3). The only material clause in the passive voice in D5 is encoded in *was involved* in (6). This process has a conscious participant as Goal: *she (Memu)*, but an unconscious subject as Actor: *all situations* (it is implied). In D6, two of the identified verbs are passivized *had been turned* (16) and *(was) used* in (34) and their subjects are *Memu* (it is implied) and *it (the husband's manhood)* and objects *Pepa* and *it (the husband's manhood)* (it is implied). The remaining verbs too are employed by both conscious and unconscious subjects: *He* in (7), *The story* in (13), *My mother* in (15), *A lion with broken legs* in (19 and 20), *This woman* in (26a and b), *women* in (27a, b and c), *They (women)* in (28), *These things* in (29), *the husband* in (31), *his manhood* in (32), *It (the husband's manhood)* in (33 and 34), *who (the woman)* in (35) and *My mother* in (37). The Goal role too is realized by both animate and inanimate participants: *the ancestors* in (7), *every single thing* in (15), *witchcraft and her husband* in (26a and b), *witchcraft, their husbands' will and them* in (27a, b and c), *strange things* in (28), *the manhood and will of the husband* in (29), *its duties* in (32), *it (the husband's manhood)* in (35) and *my father* in (37). In D7, all the Actor role is performed by conscious and unconscious beings: *you (Akoma)* in (1), *the marriage n'sua* in (6), *me (Akoma)* in (7), *your (Akoma's husband's) water* in (11) and *his life* in (18). In D8, the actions are encoded in both animate and inanimate participants. Some of them are: Actors: *I (Nkulanveng's wife)* in (2), *you (Nkulanveng)* in (12), *that (monkey-hunting)* in (15), etc., and Goals: *an answer* in (2), *monkey-hunting* in (12), *me (Nkulanveng)* in (15), etc. As the analyses reveal, relational processes (72; i.e., 27.37%) rank second. The use of this process type indicates that the eight discourses are just as much concerned with defining as describing participants. For example, in D1, four relational processes (5, 8, 13 and 16) are identified. These processes are realized by the copular verb "be" in the simple present tense form (5 and 13) and the simple past tense form (16) and the verb "grow" in the simple present tense form (8). Two of these processes are attributive (8 and 16) and the rest identifying (5 and 13). The two attributive relational processes have the following adjectives as attributes: *tall* in (8) and *strong* in (16). The Carriers bearing the attributes in (8 and 16) are both animate and inanimate: *Trees and Memu*. In D2, there are six relational processes (1, 4, 8, 9, 12 and 13). These processes are expressed by "be" only in the simple past tense form (8, 9, 12 and 13) and the verb "have" also in the simple past tense form (1 and 4). Two out of these processes are possessive (1 and 4), three attributive (9, 12 and 13) and one identifying (8). The two possessive processes have *Memu* as Possessor and *a big mouth* as Possessed. The three attributive relational processes have the following adjectives as attributes: *easy* in (9), *right* in (12) and *never easily convinced* in (13) and their Carriers are both animate and

inanimate: *It* (the fact that *Mema* thinks she is the most intelligent person) in (9) and *she* (*Mema*) in (12 and 13). The only identifying process (8) in D2 has *she* (*Mema*) as Token and *the most intelligent person* as Value. Like in D1, there are four relational processes (2, 3, 4 and 8) in D3. These processes are encoded in the verb "be" in the present conditional form (3 and 4) and the simple past form (8) and the verb "have" only in the present conditional form (2). One of these processes is possessive (2), one attributive (8) and two identifying (3 and 4). The only possessive process has *she* (*Mema*) as Possessor and *a dispute* as Possessed. In the same vein, the only attributive relational process has *she* (*Mema*) as Carrier and the adjective *angry*, which is implied, as attribute. The two identifying processes (3 and 4) in D3 have *The days* and *they* (referring back anaphorically to *The days*) as Tokens and *days filled with tension* and *days of apparent hatred* as Values. In D4, there are four relational processes (4, 5, 7 and 12) too. These are encoded in such verbs as "be" in the simple past form (5 and 7), "matter" also in the simple past form (4) and "become" in the present conditional form (12). Two out of these processes are attributive (4 and 7) and the remainder identifying (5 and 12). The two attributive relational processes are realized by *did not matter* (meaning *was not important*) in (4) and *was* in (7). The Carriers in these clauses are *it* in (4) and *the task of reconciling two estranged parties* in (7) and the attributes are *important* and *particularly daunting*. The two identifying processes (5 and 12) in this discourse have *the dispute* in (5) and *her* (*Mema's*) *mouth* in (12) as Tokens and *a private matter* in (5) and *a terrible weapon* as Values.

Again, four relational processes are identified in D5. They are realized by the copular verb "be" only in the simple the past tense form (1, 4 and 8) and the verb "have" also in the simple past tense form (5). One of these processes is attributive (4), two identifying (1 and 8) and the remainder possessive (5). The only attributive relational process has *that* (*Mema's choice of tales and proverbs in all situations*) as Carrier and the adjective *appropriate* as attribute. The participants in the two identifying relational clauses are both animate and inanimate: Tokens- *My mother* in (1) and *She* (*Mema*) in (8), and Values- *a good speaker* in (1) and *a treasure of tales and proverbs* in (8). The only possessive relational process (5) in D5 has *my mother* as Possessor and *a tale or a proverb* as Possessed. In D6, there are ten relational processes (1, 4, 9, 10, 11, 14, 17, 24, 27 and 30). These are expressed by the verb "be" in the simple present tense form (11), the simple past tense form (1, 4, 14, 24 and 27) and the conditional perfect form (10), the verb "have" only in the simple present tense form (9) and the verb "become" in the past perfect form (17) and the present conditional form (30). Six out of these processes are attributive (1, 10, 14, 24, 27 and 30), three identifying (4, 11 and 17) and the rest possessive (9). The six attributive relational processes have *Mema* in (1), *he* (*Pepa*) in (10), *Pepa* in (14), *This* (*Pepa's unconventional demeanour*) in (24), *It* in (27) and *who* (*the husband*) in (30) as Carriers and the adjectives *so unlike my father* in (1), *like* in (10), *very calm*



and placid in (14), normal in (24), customary in (27) and docile in (30) as attributes. The participants in the three identifying relational clauses are encoded in both animate and inanimate participants: Tokens- *he* (Pepa) in (4), *All I know of him* in (11) and *He* (Pepa) in (17), and Values- *Who* in (4), *what* in (11) and *an empty shell* in (17). The only possessive relational process (9) in D6 has *I* (the narrator-character, *Elang Sima*) as Possessor and *a faint memory* as Possessed. There are only two relational processes in D7. These processes are realized by "be" in the simple present tense form (3) and "have" also in the simple present tense form (12). Clause (3) is identifying, while clause (12) is possessive. The participants in the identifying clause are all animate: Token- *I* (*Akoma*), and Value- *a slave*. The possessive process has *you* (*Akoma's husband*) as Possessor and *two legs* as Possessed. In D8, there are thirty-eight relational processes (1, 5, 10, 11, 14, 18, 22, 26, 30, 33, 44, 48, 51, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 65, 69, 71, 72, 73, 78, 80, 81, 87, 91, 92, 96, 98, 101, 103, 105, 110, 112, 115 and 118). These processes are encoded in such verbs as "be" in the simple present tense form (5, 44, 58, 65, 71, 72, 80, 81, 87, 91, 96, 101, 103, 105, 112, 115 and 118), the simple past tense form (10, 14, 22, 30, 33, 48, 51, 55, 57, 73 and 98), the present perfect tense form (69 and 92) and the modulated form (18), "become" in the infinitive form (53 and 54) and the simple past tense form (78) and "have" in the simple present tense form (1), simple past tense form (11 and 26) and present perfect form (110). Twenty-eight out of these processes are identifying (5, 10, 14, 22, 33, 48, 51, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 65, 69, 71, 72, 73, 78, 80, 87, 91, 96, 98, 101, 103, 110, 112 and 115), seven attributive (18, 30, 44, 81, 92, 105 and 118) and four possessive (1, 11, 26 and 110). Some of the participants in the identifying processes are: Tokens-*you* (*Nkulanveng*) in (10), *monkey-hunting* in (14), "*I agree*" in (48), *what I am asking you* in (58), *Biloghe* in (72), and Values- *a constant visitor* in (10), *a pretext* in (14), *my answer* in (48), *this* in (58) and *my wife* in (72). The Carriers in the seven attributive clauses are: *I* (*Nkulanveng*) in (18), *who* (*Nkulanveng's in-laws*) in (30), *It* in (44), *You* (*Nkulanveng's wife*) in (81), *all the males in this village* in (92), *what you have said* in (105) and *it* in (108), and their attributes are: *very careful* in (18), *too busy* in (30), *true* in (44), *right* in (81), *very silent and inactive* in (92), *not true* in (105) and *not worthwhile staying in a village such as this one* in (118). The four possessive relational processes have *I* (*Nkulanveng's wife*) in (1 and 110), *you* (*Nkulanveng*) in (11) and *you and I* (*Nkulanveng and his wife*) in (26) as Possessors and *a question* in (1), *friends* in (11), *the chance* in (26) and *enough of your nonsense* as Possessed.

The analyses also exude that mental processes (49; 18.56%) come third. The presence of these processes denotes that the participants in the eight discourses encode meanings of cognition, affection and perception therein. For instance, the only mental process in D1 is a cognition process. It is encoded in *know* in (1) and its Senser is a conscious subject: *I* (the narrator-character, *Elang Sima*). Likewise, the unique mental process in D2 is a cognition process. It is expressed with *believed* in (7) and its Senser is *Mema*. Again, the only mental process identified in D3 is a

cognition process. It is realized by *remember* in (1) and its Senser is *I* (the *narrator-character, Elang Sima*). Also, the three mental processes drawn from D4 are cognition processes (2, 10 and 11). They are encoded in *was at odds with* (meaning *disagreed with*) in (2) and *knew* in (10 and 11) and the Senser role in them is played by *a member* in (2) and *Everybody* in (10 and 11). The only mental process identified in D5 is a cognition process too. It is encoded in *believe* in (7) and its Senser is a conscious subject: *I* (the *narrator-character, Elang Sima*). Unlike in the foregoing, the seven mental processes in D6 are both cognition and perception processes. The cognition processes are five in number: *do not know* in (5), *did not really know* in (6), *became fully aware of* in (8), *know* in (11) and *was thought of* in (21). The Senser role in these clauses is performed by conscious subjects: *I* (*narrator-character, Elang Sima*) in (5, 6, 8 and 11) and *people* (it is implied) in (21). The perception processes are *hear* in (1) and *was never heard* in (22) and their Senses are both conscious and unconscious: *I* (*narrator-character, Elang Sima*) in (1) and *people* (it is implied) in (22). Unlike in D6, the three mental processes in D7 are cognition and affection processes. Two of these processes are cognition processes (2 and 4) and the remainder affection process (8). The two cognition processes are expressed with *think* in (2) and *do not remember* in (4). The participants that play the Senser role here are *You* (*Akoma's husband*) in (2) and *I* (*Akoma*) in (4). The affection process is encoded in *want* in (8) and its Senser is *you* (*Akoma's husband*). The thirty-two mental processes in D8 are cognition, affection and perception processes. Fourteen out of these processes are cognition processes (8, 9, 37, 38, 47, 48, 75, 79, 106, 107, 109, 113, 114 and 117), twelve affection processes (3, 4, 24, 35, 38, 42, 59, 60, 62, 66, 67 and 85) and six perception processes (7, 16, 17, 20, 49 and 91). The fourteen cognition processes are realized by such verbs as *remember* in (8, 9, 37 and 38), *agree* in (47 and 48), *know* in (75 and 79), *understand* in (106), (*had better*) *think* in (107, 109 and 113) and *decide* in (114 and 117). The Senser role is performed by conscious subjects: *I* (*Nkulanveng's wife*) in (8, 9, 37, 38a, 48 and 114), *you* (*Nkulanveng's wife*) in (47 and 75), *you* (*Nkulanveng*) in (79, 109 and 113), *I* (*Nkulanveng*) in (106), *let me* in (107) and *we, women of this village* in (117). The twelve affection processes are encoded in *love(d)* in (3, 4, 35, 42, 59, 60, 62, 66, 67 and 85) felt in (24 and 38) and the Senser role therein is performed by *you* (*Nkulanveng*) in (3, 59, 60, 62 and 85) *I* (*Nkulanveng*) in (4, 35, 42, 66 and 67), *I* (*Nkulanveng's wife*) in (38b), *it* (*Nkulanveng's chest*) in (24). The six perception processes are expressed with the verb "see" in the infinitive, the simple present tense, the simple past tense and the present conditional forms in (7, 16, 17, 20 and 91) and heard in (49). The Senser role in these processes is played by animate participants: *I* (*Nkulanveng*) in (7, 16 and 17), *a young man and a young woman* in (20) and *I* (*Nkulanveng's wife*) in (49 and 91).



## 5. Interpretation of the Findings

"When people use language to make meanings, they do so in specific situations, and the form of language that they use in discourse is influenced by the complex aspects of those situations" (Bloor and Bloor, 2004:5). From the foregoing, it is obvious that no language use exists *ex nihilo*. In fact, language always carries the weight of its user's intents, biases, perceptions, beliefs, ideology, gender, etc. This theoretical hypothesis is actually validated by the current study in that the linguistic choices made by the personae in the eight discourses reveal how they represent gender. This paper interprets the findings drawn from the analyses in consonance with Judith Butler's view of gender as *sperformance*. This view is very insightful because (i) it constructs gender as a flexible, dynamic or changing phenomenon; (ii) it conceives gender as something negotiable in a social practice or context; (iii) it defies and deconstructs conventional and epistemological conceptions and perceptions regarding gender construction. In this perspective, Butler (1988: 519) argues that "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self." Given her functional approach to gender, she further claims that "Gender is not passively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy. Gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure" (Ibid: 526).

The linguistic analyses, as mentioned earlier on, do validate Butler's claims. For instance, In D1, the narrator-character's (Elang Sima's) language represents, his mother, Mema, as someone with an unfailing strength. The analyses of the narrator-character's choices in Modality and Transitivity confirm this. D1 begins with the narrator-character's symbolic representation of the elusive nature of life and the frail nature of the things (trees, river, wind, etc.) it includes before time (see clauses 1-14). But the narrator-character foregrounds Mema's strength as superior to that of life itself in that time cannot vanquish her: "13. It (T)is (Pi) in the nature of things (Cl) 14. that the years (A) should (Ms) take (Pm) their toll (G). 15. But the years (A) did not vanquish (Pm) Mema (G)." The lexeme "strong" is further used by the narrator-character to emphatically underscore Mema's strength: "16. because Mema (Cr) was (Pi) strong, a *strong* woman (At), indeed". The foregoing truly sounds hyperbolic but its real sense lies in the elusive or mythologized nature of the female principle or woman herself. In traditional African societies, woman was conceived as the bearer/giver of life, and, as a result

of this, she was seriously revered with religious and figurative terms. For example, the Igbo use lexemes like "Nneka" (Mother is supreme) and the Yoruba employ such figurative or proverbial expressions as "Iya ni wura" (Mother is gold) to revere woman. In D2, Mema is represented with linguistic terms that characterize her as assertive, courageous and especially intelligent. The subsequent passage corroborates this: "7. Somewhere in her heart (Cl), Mema (S) always (Cl) believed (Pme) 8. she (T) was (Pi) the most intelligent person (V) in the universe (Cl)." Similarly, in D3, Mema is portrayed as someone who is terrifying, dreadful and stubborn. Consider these clauses: "1. I (S) vaguely remember (Pme) those times (Ph) 2. when she (Pr) would (Ms) have (Pi) a dispute (Pd) with either her husband, my father, or other people (Cx) in the village (Cl). 3. The days following the dispute (T) would (Ms) always be (Pi) days filled with tension (V). 4. They (T) would (Ms) also be (Pi) days of apparent hatred (V) 5. during which Mema (A) would (Ms) adopt (Pm) a stubborn demeanour (G), [working (Pm) her way (G)] silently throughout the hut and the village (Cm) (Cm)." Interestingly, the portrayal of Mema as somebody who is highly feared spreads thematically through D4:7. But the task of reconciling estranged parties (Cr) was (Pi) particularly daunting (At) 8. when Mema (G) was involved (Pm). 9. The person [secretly appointed (Pm) by the village (Cm) to act (Pm) as a mediator (Co)] (Cc) (Sy) would have (Ms) to approach (Pv) her (Rv) with extreme caution and expert tact, for fear of my mother's mouth (Cm). 10. Everybody (S) knew (Pme) her mouth (Ph). 11. Everybody (S) knew (Pme) 12. that her mouth (T) could (Ms) become (Pi) a terrible weapon (V) 13. if caused to start spitting out (Pm) words (G) like bullets (Cm)." In D5, the trait of oral dexterity is highlighted as one of the sources of Mema's power:

1. My mother (T) was (Pi) a good speaker (V). 2. Like all the village people who (A) mastered (Pm) the art of speech (G), 3. she (A) always (Cl) began (Pm) her talks (G) with a tale or a proverb (Cm) 4. that (Cr) was (Pi) appropriate (At) for the particular situation (Cc). 5. And since my mother (Pr) had (Pi) a tale or a proverb (Pd) for all situations (Cc) 6. in which (Cl) she (G) was involved (Pm), 7. I (S) believe (Pme) 8. she herself (T) was (Pi) a treasure of tales and proverbs (V) (p. 7).

Moreover, in D6, Mema is contrasted with her husband, Pepa, with the view of foregrounding her power. In this discourse, she is depicted as someone who subdues her husband with witchcraft, controls his manhood and will, and runs her household with a heavy hand and a big mouth:

1. Mema (Cr), [I (S) hear (Pme)], was (Pi) so unlike my father (At). 2. Pepa. 3. My father. 4. Who (V) was (Pi) he (T) really (Cm)? 5. I (S) do not know (Pme). 6. I (S) did not really (Cm) know (Pme) my father (Ph). 7. He (A) joined (Pm) the ancestors (G) 8. long before I (S) became fully aware of (Pme) the things happening (Ph) around me (Cl). 9. So I (Pr) have (Pi) a faint memory (Pd) 10. of what he (Cr) could (Ms) have been (Pi) like (At). 11. [All (Ph) I (S) know (Pme) of him (Cm)] (T) is (Pi) what (V) 12. Mema and other people (Sy) told (Pv) me (Rv). 13. The story (A) went (Pm) 14. that Pepa (T) was (Pi) a very calm and placid man (V) with no real manly power (Cm) in our household (Cl). 15. My mother, [her critics (Sy) said (Pv)] (A), ran (Pm) every single thing (G) in the hut (Cl) with a heavy hand, and a big mouth (Cm). 16. Pepa, [I (Rv)



was told (Pv)] (G), had been turned (Pm) into a mere woman (Cm) in his own hut (Cl). 17. He (T) had become (Pi) an empty shell (V). 18. A soundless tom-tom. 19. A lion with broken legs who (A) could (Ms) no longer bounce (Pm) 20. and pounce (Pm). 21. He (Ph) was thought of (Pme) as someone (Co) [so subdued and bewildered by the power (Cm) wielded by his wife (Cm) inside and outside the hut (Cl)] (Cm) 22. that his voice (Ph) was never heard (Pme) [rising above that of the panther of a woman] (Cm) 23. that people (Sy) called (Pv) his wife (Rv). 24. This (Cr) was not (Pi) normal (At), 25. people (Sy) said (Pv). 26. This woman (A) must (Ms) have used (Pm) witchcraft (G) [to subdue (Pm) her husband (G)] (Cc).

Just like Mema, Akoma is depicted in D7 as an insubordinate and defying housewife. She openly defies her husband:

1. 'Ah Akoma, my beloved wife, since when do you (A) serve (Pm) me (B) food (G) without water (Cm)?' 2. Ah! You (S) think (Pme) 3. I (T) am (Pi) your slave (V)? 4. I (S) do not remember (Pme) 5. my father (Sy) telling (Pv) you (Rv), 6. when you (A) paid (Pm) the marriage *n'sua* (G) to my people (Cl) fifteen *mimbuh* ago (Cl), 7. that he (A) had sold (Pm) me (G) to you (Cl) as a slave (Co). 8. If you (S) want (Pme) water (Ph) 9. to drink (Pm), 10. go (Pm) 11. and get (Pm) your water (G) yourself. 12. Don't you (Pr) have (Pi) two legs (Pd) like me (Cm)? 13. Besides, you (A) are sitting (Pm) closer to the water pot (Cl) 14. than I (A) am (Pm)."

The reason why Akoma refuses to serve her husband food with water is because she cogently endorses the sisterhood principle or political solidarity (Hooks, 2000). The term 'sisterhood', as we understand it, is the bonding of women with a like mind. It is the close loyal relationship between women who share the same ideas and aims (Hornby, 2010). Hooks (Ibid: 15) holds that "Feminist sisterhood is rooted in shared commitment to struggle against patriarchal injustice, no matter the form that injustice takes". In D7, Akoma, like other housewives, is committed to ending spousal maltreatment typical of patriarchal behaviour. So, she, like other women, observes a protracted strike that is meant to force all the men in Otongwaku village to go and beg back Ntutume's wife, Biloghe, who has left the village ten months earlier after a squabble with Ntutume, her husband. The same bonding attitude is noticeable in Nkulanveng's wife in D8. In D8, Nkulanveng's wife plays the role of a questioner, whereas her husband performs the role of an answerer, and this denotes somehow that she is in control: "1. 'Ah Nkulanveng, my husband, I (Pr) have (Pi) a question (Pd) for you (Cc), 2. and I (A) need (Pm) an answer (G) now (Cl). 3. Do you (S) really (Cm) love (Pme) me (Ph)?' 4. 'Of course (Cm), my wife, I (S) love (Pme) you (Ph)'. She asks Nkulanveng this question over and over again. She also problematizes his love for her by relating it with the love she wants all the men in the land of Otongwaku to have for her folk: "67. 'If you (S) love (Pme) me (Ph) [like you (Sy) say (Pv)] (Cm), 68. why have you (Sy) not told (Pv) all the husbands of this village (Rv) [to go (Pm) and fetch (Pm) Ntutume's wife (G)] (Vb)? 69. It (T) has now (Cl) been (Pi) moons almost as many as the fingers on both of my hands (V), 70. and no one (A) has budged (Pm) a finger (G) [to go (Pm) and get (Pm) her (G) back] (Cc). 71. Is (Pi) that (T) [the way you (A) show (Pm) love (G) for me (Cc)] (V)?" In addition to this, as an informed guardian, she helps her husband get rid of his de-solidarizing attitudes towards

the community in general and Biloghe in particular: "72. 'But, woman ... Biloghe (T)is not (Pi) my wife (V). 73. If it (T)were (Pi) you (V) 74. who (A)had gone (Pm), 75. you (S)know (Pme) 76. I (A)would (Ms) have got (Pm) you (G) back very quickly (Cm).' 77. 'Nonsense! 78. When did family problems (T) become (Pi) one man's problems in this village (V)? 79. You (S) know (Pme) perfectly well (Cm) 80. that it (T)is (Pi) everybody's duty (V) in this village (Cl) [to go (Pm) and tryt o get (Pm) Ntutume's wife (G) back from her people (Cl)] (Cc).' 81. 'You (Cr)are (Pi) right (At), woman, but ...' 82. 'There is (Pe) no "but" (X)." Following this, she warns Nkulanveng (and through him other husbands/men) to do something fast in order to bring Biloghe back otherwise she herself and other women will leave their households:

106. I (Nkulanveng) (S)understand (Pme) [what (Vb) you (Sy) are saying (Pv)] (Ph). 107. Let me (Ph)think (Pme) about it (Ct). 108. 'Owe. 109. You (S)had better think (Pme) about it (Ct) fast (Cm). 110. For I (Pr)have had (Pi) enough of your nonsense (Pd). 111. So, today (Cl), I (Sy)will say (Pv) this (Vb), 112. and my dead people (T)are (Pi) my witnesses (V): 113. think (Pme) about it (Ct) 114. before I (S)decide (Pme) 115. that it (T)is (Pi) also time (V) [for me (Cc) to leave (Pm) this village (G)] (Cc). 116. Do (Pm) something (G) 117. before we, women of this village (S), decide (Pme) 118. that it (Cr)is not (Pi) worthwhile staying in a village such as this one (At) 119. that (A)does not care enough about (Pm) the wives (G) 120. it (A)marries (Pm).'

## Conclusion

This paper has explored how the two facets of gender- masculinity and femininity- are discursively enacted in Daniel Mengara's novel *Mema* (2003) from SFL and Butlerian perspective. As the linguistic analyses exude, the choices in Modality, especially in its sub-category of modalization, encode such interpersonal dimensions as judgments, opinions, perceptions, biases, attitudes, etc., in the eight discourses under study. In other words, the presence of modalizers in these discourses denotes that the characters therein express a certain degree of certainty, probability and usuality towards somebody or something or they predicate therein their stance to the truth-value. It also denotes the (in) frequency of some roles, attributes and traits allotted to one gender or the other. The transitivity analyses reveal this apprehension better. The choices in transitivity, by means of the key identified process types (material, mental and relational), the participants and the circumstances, display gender as astylized repetition of performed acts which forcefully becomes naturalized over time. For instance, Mema's use of witchcraft to subdue her husband as well as all her unconventional and eccentric traits have come to be naturalized and forced with time on her society. The foregoing example validates Butler's claim that "Gender is not passively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy. *Gender is what*



*is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure*" (1988:526) (our italics).

The transitivity analyses invariably disclose Mema as the one who puts on masculinity in that she is repeatedly foregrounded in roles like *using witchcraft to subdue her husband, controlling her husband's manhood and will and running every single thing in the household with a heavy and a big mouth*, etc. She is also represented as the bearer of such attributes and Values as *strong, angry, a good speaker, the most intelligent person, a treasure of tales and proverbs*, etc. By contrast, Pepa, Mema's husband is portrayed as someone who, under constraint, puts on femininity. Interestingly enough, Pepa is not foregrounded in processes with a positive denotation and connotation. He is rather portrayed as *A lion with broken legs who could no longer bounce and pounce* (see clauses 9 and 10 in D6). Attributes and Values like *docile, a very calm and placid man with no real manly power, an empty shell, A soundless tom-tom*, etc., are all suggestive of Pepa's gender. Like Mema, Akoma and Nkulanveng's wife are depicted as women who defy and vanquish their husbands. Both women challenge their husbands by political solidarity (Hooks, 2000). They want all the men in their village to go and beg Biloghe, one of theirs, back from her parents. They then devise various strategies to make the men comply with their request, which they finally do. This role taken on by the two women denotes power. Butler (2009) argues that the reproduction of gender is always a negotiation of power. The term 'power' refers to the ability to control people or things (Hornby, 2010). Power should also be understood here as access to and control of institutions like government, religion, family, school, language, to name just a few. Power, as most people naively think, is not naturally given; it is earned through a stylized repetition of performed acts in a social practice. As Daniel Mengara's literary language exudes, it is women who actually own and exercise power, not men. Nkulanveng's wife notes this in what follows: "92. all the males (Cr) in this village (Cl) have been (Pi) very silent and inactive(At)". It follows from this to establish here that, though men obviously rule the world, women actually rule the lives of the men who rule the world.

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