

A TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF ALKALI'S *THE STILLBORN*

BY

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**BEING A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POST
GRADUATE STUDIES, BAYERO UNIVERSITY, KANO IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
MASTER OF ARTS (M.A) DEGREE IN ENGLISH (LANGUAGE)**

AUGUST, 2015

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is a product of my research efforts undertaken under the supervision of Professor Sadiya Sani Daura and has not been presented elsewhere for the award of a degree or certificate. All sources have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, m strength, The Lifter of my soul, for in Him I can do all things. I also dedicate it to my husband and children: Chiamaka Pat, Chidi Victor, and Chijioke Samuel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing this work is like a dream. Although the journey was rough and tedious, my God saw me through. I give Him all the praises and glory for the strength and spirit of perseverance. My immeasurable gratitude goes to my supervisor, Professor Sadiya Sani Daura, and my internal examiner, Dr. Rabi Abdulsalam Ibrahim, for their encouragements and constructive criticisms which ameliorated my insight into the work. May God reward you richly. I am equally grateful to my lecturers in the Department, Professor Aliyu Kamal, Professor Mustapha Ahmad Isa, Prof. Saleh Abdu, Dr. Amina Adamu and Dr. Khaleel Bakeet Isma'il. I thank most especially, the Vice Chancellor, Bayero University, Kano, Professor Abubakar Rasheed, for his advice, counsel and encouragement.

I owe the success of this work to the encouragements and supports of many friends and colleagues in the Department of English, Federal College of Education, Kano. My profound gratitude goes to my dear Dean, Hajiya Asabe Mohammed Yusuf, my former Head of Department Comrade Salihu Ahmad Yusuf (Baba), Mr. Mike Adeyi- my brother and best friend, Mrs. Ejikeme Blessing, Mrs. Lami Offie, Dr. Jacob O. Aloba (Head of Department), Mal. Mohamed Umar, Alh. Sanusi Umar, Mal. Sadiq Mohammed of Federal University, Dutse, Jigawa State, Mrs. Julie Martins, my two sisters- Fatima Mohammed and Lami Abba Ismail, Mrs Dalmeida Chibuzor, Mrs Ochege Edith, Mrs. Elizabeth Nwodo, the Reverend and members of Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, Kano Parish, Mrs. Mary Aibangbe, Hajiya Jummai Nda Suleiman (Dean, School of Education), and all my M.A. course mates. All these and many more stood by me and gave me the push I needed to complete this work. Mere words will never be sufficient to express my

gratitude to all of you. May God Almighty reward you immensely Amen. I am most grateful to all the sources that I used their materials for this study.

For the love and support I received from my family, words are not enough to express my gratitude; from the depth of my heart I say thank you. I thank my children: Chiamaka, Chidi and Chijioke. I also thank my beloved sister, Ngozi Favour Agwu, for all her support and sacrifices; you are a sister indeed. It is my earnest prayer that God Almighty grants all your heart desires and make you what He wants you to be Amen.

I must not fail to appreciate my husband, Mr. Ogbuagu, Onyemachi Samuel for the role he played in the course of this programme. May God bless and repay you abundantly.

To all those I did not mention their names, I thank you all. I remain eternally grateful to you. I consider myself fortunate and most favoured knowing that you are always there for me. May God bless you all richly Amen.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the roles which certain linguistic choices play in building up characters in novels. This it does through applying the transitivity theory on the character of Grandma in Alkali's *The Stillborn*. The study is basically a content analysis of the utterances, thoughts and actions of Grandma and other characters that she interacts with as well as the narrator's reports. Through purposive sampling, six extracts were selected and a total of six processes with a frequency of two hundred and seven occurrences were analysed using the ordinary descriptive percentage. The findings affirm that indeed, language is manipulated to construct characters. It also revealed that five classifications of transitivity processes were employed to construct and represent the personality of the character of Grandma. They are: material process, verbal process, relational process, mental process and behavioural process. The study further revealed that the material process in transitivity description is a process that describes physical or tangible actions or events and it determines whether a character is active, strong or weak. The preponderance of Grandma's material processes in her actions and speeches indicate that she is a strong and active character who is described by members of her family as a witch and also a shrewd and domineering person. This study also establishes that though Grandma did not get the freedom that she pines for due to her lack of education, she did not passively succumb to the dictates of the men in her kind of society. The study concludes that transitivity analysis gives more nuances to the interpretation of the personality of a character, and this implies that an understanding of the workings of these processes takes the reader beyond ordinary reading and understanding.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

This dissertation applies Halliday's theory of transitivity in the construction of personality in Alkali's *The Stillborn* with a view to identifying and explaining how the characters' personalities are portrayed and represented through the use of language or language manipulation. People who use language and study language are often interested in how things are done with language, how they can make meanings to build up and be understood through the choice of words and grammatical resources (Bloor and Bloor, 2004). Kroger and Wood (2000) claim that language is taken to be not simply a tool for description and a medium of communication but as a social practice, a way of doing things. In the words of Gee (2005:10) "language has a magical property: when we speak or write, we design what we have to say to fit the situation in which we are communicating; though, sometimes, how we speak or write creates that very situation". Hence, language shapes and reinforces beliefs, and attitude. For Halliday (1985), a language is interpreted as a system of meanings, which are often accompanied by forms through which the meanings can be realized and answer the question, "how are these meanings expressed?" This puts the forms of a language in a different perspective; as means to an end, rather than an end in itself. It is from this point of view that systemic functional linguistics was developed by Halliday and his associates during the 1960s

This study carries out a transitivity analysis on Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn*. The choice of the novel is informed by the author's display of creativity in the construction and representation of her characters through meta-functional language processes. The

framework of analysis (transitivity theory) which is an offshoot of The Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a linguistic system that is concerned with the ‘coding of the goings-on’. That is; who does what in relation to whom/what, where, when, how and why. Transitivity theory was initiated by the British born Australian linguist Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday (often addressed as M.A.K. Halliday). He is the propounder of the internationally influential systemic functional linguistic model (of language) His grammatical description is known as systemic functional grammar (SFG). He describes himself as a generalist, meaning that he has tried to look at language from every possible perspective and has works which are often described as “wander[ing] the highways and byways of language”.

Halliday’s (1985a) transitivity theory provides a useful linguistic framework for discovering the main linguistic features of a certain literary discourse. The analysis and its application to literary discourse in this study basically follow the ideational function of language. The ideational function of the clause is concerned with transmission of ideas; its function is that of “representing processes” or ‘experiences’, actions, events, processes and consciousness and relation (Halliday 1985a: 32). The term ‘process’ is used here in an extended sense to account for all phenomena and anything that can be expressed by a ‘verb’; be it event, whether physical or not, state or relation. Halliday further adds that the processes expressed through language are the production of our conception of the world or point of view. It is on this premise that characters in literary works are developed.

Characters are important elements employed by writers to convey their message to the world. Therefore, the power, efficacy and potency of characters in a literary work

can never be overstated. The identification of the meta-functional language processes deployed by the author of the selected text- *The Stillborn* in the formation or construction of the characters in this study is hoped to aid readers' interpretation as well as understanding of the text.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Alkali's novel, *The Stillborn*, since its publication in 1984, has attracted considerable critical attention especially in Africa after winning the Prestigious Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) prize for prose – fiction in 1985 (Amali, 1997: 9). This is because of the notion that the text is a moving and inspiring text which places the author among the selected group of writers who have focused and deepened readers' understanding of the situation of women in Africa – the plight of African women in a patriarchal society. As a pioneer novel from the north that is concerned with the position of women in a patriarchal society, it has generated quite a number of academic works. Scholars have focused their works on *The Stillborn* from different perspectives; for instance, Zakariya (2012) is a socio-cultural study; Azuike (2003) a radical feminist study; Umar (2009) is a feminist study of the portrayal of male characters; Odinye's (2002) study is on feminism and self assertion of female characters; Hellandendu (2011) conducted a comparative linguistic analysis of modification in Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Most of the works cited above have Li- the central character as the focal point. This current study considers an aspect that has not been studied before by analysing *The Stillborn* using the transitivity theory in order to identify and explain how the personality of the character of Grandma is constructed and portrayed and through meta-functional language processes used in the novel.

The aim of this study is to apply Halliday's transitivity theory in the analysis of *The Stillborn* so as to identify and explain how characters' personalities are portrayed and represented and how this enhanced the writer's thematic focus. The objectives are to:

1. examine the types of processes employed to construct the character of Grandma and to identify which of the processes is predominantly used to depict her personality,
2. determine the effectiveness of the processes in identifying the roles of characters in a give text,
3. show that linguistic choices in transitivity play an important role in character construction and portrayal in a literary text.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions are used for the study;

- i. What are the types of processes employed to construct the character of Grandma and which of the processes is predominantly used to depict her personality?
- ii. How do the linguistic choices in transitivity play an important role in the construction and portrayal of characters in a literary text?
- iii. How effective are the processes in identifying the roles of characters in a given text.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Every writer has an intent- message he/she wants to communicate to the reader using effective language or language manipulations. Therefore, this work is significant in

that it shows the important role linguistic choices in transitivity play in building up characters towards the enhancement of a writer's thematic focus. This is because, the reader is able to interpret the linguistic items employed by the writer (Aliu, 2002). This research reveals how meanings are implicated on language meta-function through different processes. These processes show that language structures can produce certain meanings and ideology which are not always explicit for the readers.

The application of transitivity model on *The Stillborn* – a text written by a northern author in Nigeria is considered timely; especially in this part of the country where literary works/studies is yet to be accorded the recognition that it deserves. This work will bring to fore the effectiveness of transitivity theory on linguistics analysis of prose works. It will also further confirm the fact that language is literature and literature is language in use, and that literary works are nothing but the product of how language is used to reflect the human society directly or otherwise (Gee, 2005). As a reflection of the society (Adeyi and Alheri 2007: 27), prose-narrative which is one form of literary work is a medium writers deploy to guide, re-orientate, sensitize, encourage and sanitize a people. And to achieve these goals, the readers must be aware of the efficacy and effectiveness of the language used by writers to portray their characters' personalities; so as to have good interpretation and understanding of the story as well as the message. To this end, this research is intended to show that linguistic analysis alleviates the challenges readers faced when confronted with the task of analyzing characters.

Furthermore, this research is hoped to contribute to the dearth of academic works on transitivity analysis of prose narratives. The research is also significant in that it hopes to add to existing knowledge and stimulate interest in more research in transitivity

analysis. Finally, it is hoped that this study hopes to contribute towards an understanding of how linguistic analysis of a text can be used to interpret meanings in a literary text. For the pedagogists, it serves as a guide for teaching language through literature.

1.5 Scope and Delimitation

Alkali has many literary works to her credit. However, this study is limited to *The Stillborn* and to the character of Grandma. The choice of the text is due to the fact that first, it brings to a fore, the position of African women in a patriarchal society; and secondly, it is the first prose work by a woman from northern Nigeria. The first six chapters out of the nine chapters of the text formed the corpus of this work. However, references will be made to the text generally where necessary. In all, a total of six extracts from the selected texts are used for the analysis.

The work focuses on the analysis of Grandma's utterances, thoughts, actions and the opinions of other characters as she interacts with them as well as the narrator's accounts of her (Grandma) using Halliday's transitivity theory. Though there are many linguistic theories, the choice of transitivity in this study is a corollary of the fact that literary works are nothing but 'the beautification of language as it reflects what goes on in the human society' (Adeyi and Alheri 2007: 27), and language viewed as "a network of systems or interacted sets of options for making meaning" (Kress, 1989: 169). Another reason for the choice of the theory is because this research is a linguistic analysis.

1.6 Biography of Zaynab Alkali

According to Amali (1997) cited in Azuike (2003), Zaynab Alkali was born on February 3rd, 1952 in Garkida, Adamawa State. Her father – a teacher worked with missionaries as a translator. His sudden death left eleven year old Zaynab Alkali

shattered; this was because, she was very close to her father. With the support of her mother and her elder sister, Zaynab Alkali was able to acquire formal education. She attended Queen Elizabeth Secondary School, Ilorin – Kwara State between 1963 and 1968. The following year, she proceeded to Ado Bayero College (ABC), Kano campus of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. She graduated with a B.A. (Hons) degree in 1973. She obtained her second degree in 1976. She is married and blessed with five children (Amali, 1997 in Azuike, 2003).

Alkali's insatiable quest for knowledge ushered her back again to her alma mater (Bayero University, Kano) for a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in African literature in 1989. She completed the programme successfully in 1995. She is an internationally acclaimed writer who has traveled widely. Her global recognition is not unconnected to her creative works. Her work as a writer began in 1978. They are works that explore and portray the complex experiences of women in a patriarchal society, and their struggles to overcome their problems. She gives insights to the plight of African women in a patriarchal society and how education is used as a 'weapon' for liberation through the display of the lives of her characters within a larger cultural and social force in Nigeria (<http://www.ps/siu/edu/iss/i.did/mwp.html>).

Professor Alkali – often referred to as the first female writer from northern Nigeria, has received two major awards in recognition of her creative works. These awards are: the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) prestigious prize for the best Nigeria novel in 1985 and Roll of Honour Award presented by Creative Writer's Association, Zaria in 1987 for her first published work, *The Stillborn*. Her other works include *The Virtuous Woman* (1987), a collection of short stories titled *Cobwebs* and

other stories (1997). Six of the stories are published in journals and anthologies in Nigeria and abroad (Amali, 1997: 9).

1.7 Plot Summary of *The Stillborn*

The Stillborn tells a story that centres on Li. She is the protagonist – the central character in the text. At the beginning, we see Li returns from a boarding primary school to the village. Restlessly, she ponders over the restraints the village imposes on children, adolescents and women. There is constant strain between her and her father. She desires to get her freedom. In this context, for women getting freedom is only through marriage. She marries Habu, who soon left for the town to work out a career. For four years, he does not ask his wife to join him in the town. When eventually she goes to town to meet him, Habu is shattered and in ruins and estranged from his wife. Nevertheless, he impregnates her and for many reasons, including beating and neglect, Li had to go back to the village. By the time she does her father was dead, leaving a vacuum of headship of the house with its responsibilities. Li, without a responsible husband, decides to take her destiny into her own hands; so as to take care of her father's family. All these strengthened her determination to improve her education in order to get a means of sustaining a life of self-dependent. She studies and acquires Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). With this, she works and builds a house to take care of her responsibilities towards her father's family. Having secured her own means for an independent life, at the end of the story, she plans to go back to her estranged husband.

The above is the central story. But there are other stories that are not as developed as the one above. There is the story of Faku, Li's friend who rushes into marriage to escape from the boredom of village life and insults. She is neglected as a second wife.

She leaves her husband and becomes a call woman as a means of leading an independent life. She later on improved her education and becomes a social worker. She achieves some levels of liberation from the social constraints just like her friend, Li.

Another story, which is interesting as an attempt to break the social restraints of a patriarchal society that closes women in, is the story of Grandma. Uneducated, she is limited in her quest for freedom, unlike Li and Faku. In the context of the village society, Grandma seeks to liberate herself from the oppression of women by changing husbands. In all, she marries sixteen husbands; Kaka- Li's grandfather is the sixteenth. In all her exploration by changing husbands, she did not find the happiness of independent life free from male oppression that she earnestly longs for.

1.8 Narrative Style

The Stillborn is a third person narrative where the author employs an 'impersonal' style narration, which is a third person narrative where reference by the narrator to herself is avoided. This passage from Alkali's *The Stillborn* is an example:

...that day was bad but today was worse. This time, without mentioning names, she toad made it clear to her listeners, whom she was abusing. She took a broom and began to clear a space where she would soon spread the ears of her corn to dry. (The Stillborn: 53)

This style of narrative eradicates direct involvement of the author thereby inviting the reader to assume that there is no explicitly 'you' (Leech and Short, 1979:266). Alkali presented the narration to the reader directly without an intermediary. The corollary of this is that the reader is able to collapse the addresser side of the novels discourse structure, so that implied author and narrator become merged. This, according to Leech

and Short (1979:206), is why most third person narrators are omniscient: because they stand in the place of the implied author that take on absolute knowledge.

1.9 Characterization in *The Stillborn*

Every work of prose must feature character or characters whose actions, inactions and interactions help in facilitating the development of the story. They act out the events recounted by the author. These characters could be major, minor, flat, round and so on. In *The Stillborn*, the female characters are placed higher than the male characters. This implies that the author tries to pass a message of equality in the society. By extension, it implies that women should not be neglected, for they too possess those skills men have and with the help, love and support of the men, their (women) skills will be achieved for a brighter future.

As we can see from the plot summary, Li is one of the characters that attracts the highest attention as the story unfolds. She is one of the female characters in the text (i.e. the protagonist and heroine), she is a young determined, ambitious fearless girl who is always conscious of her looks and her surrounding and society. As a young girl, she seeks to escape from her father's compound which she describes as suffocating and so she feels trapped and unhappy at home. She marries Habu and waits for four years while Habu left for the city to seek for better life (to pursue his career as a medical doctor). Later, she joins him in the city; she is humiliated and treated cruelly by Habu, her husband in the city. She decides to go back home to her father's house. After her education that brings her maturity and independence, she forgives her husband and decides to go back to him. This decision is partly as a result of her knowledge of his involvement in an accident.

Awa, Li's elder sister is another prominent character in the novel. She has the traditional qualities of a typical African woman. She is submissive to both her husband and her father, hardworking and very respectful. She has a mortal fear for their father Baba who makes her submissive beyond reason. Having completed her primary seven educations, she remains at home as a class teacher in the village primary school. Awa needs a resilient attitude and a strongly desire to go back to school. She fails woefully; she marries Danfioma, a headmaster in the village primary school. Her caring and loving husband later turns to a drunkard because the government took over the schools and hospital without making him the principal due to his low level of education. Awa has a horde of children to cater for. And so she has to start petty trading so as to take care of her heart-broken drunken husband and their children.

Faku is another female character that Alkali used to pass her message. Faku is Li's closest friend who had suffered since she was born. At six years, her father died, three years later, her two brothers drowned in a flood and she is left alone with her mother. As a result of this incident, the village calls her mother a "witch". The villagers believe that her family background will never allow her to get married. She decides to have a responsible and educated man as husband, a man who stays in the city. She ends up marrying a worthless womanizer called Garba, who already has a woman in the city with six children. She leaves her husband and becomes a call woman in order to cater for herself. She later acquires education and becomes a social worker thereby liberating herself and because she earns her own living, she becomes independent.

Grandma is yet another character in the novel she is an old uneducated woman whose quest for freedom from male oppression and dictates leads her into marrying

sixteen husbands. She is a self assertive old woman with strong will power Li's grand father is the sixteenth husband. She has no child of her own but nurtured and trained Kaka's (her husband's) only child (Baba) from the age of six when his (Baba's) mother died. She is said to have ruled them with "iron hand". She is a dirty and a very abusive old woman that does not spare any body that offends her. Her foul languages and sharp tongue usually silence men in her community. She is disrespectful and disagrees with the passive role assigned to women and female children in her society. As a result, she is described as shrewd and domineering. She is a wise, cunning but beautiful. Her beauty made it easy for her to marry and remarry several times. Though members of her family, especially Li like her funny stories, they hate her craftiness. She is also boastful. An instance is when she says she was very beautiful when she was younger and was a priestess to some goddess; a story that Li doubts its authenticity.

On the other hand, Alkali's male characters are presented as abusive authoritative domineering and sometimes irresponsible. For instance, Sule(Li's elder brother). He hates his father's definition of discipline and his (father) religious extreme. He enjoys drinking and smoking with his friends. He shares so many interests with his sister Li and shields her whenever she is in trouble with their father. He impregnates the village blacksmith's daughter and denies it. The father disowns him and he becomes a prodigal son. He passes through series of hardship. At a point, he is jailed for robbery. After he is released from the prison, he meets a businessman from Niger Republic who later adopts him as a son. He marries the man's daughter and relocates to Niger.

Another male character in the text is Baba. He is the father of Li (the central character-the heroine) and the step son of Grandma. His mother died when he was six

years. Grandma took the responsibility of bringing him up. Baba is a very harsh, authoritative well cultured religious man. He is an extreme disciplinarian whose mode of discipline is not appreciated by members of his family. He is feared by everybody in his household with the exception of Li. As a result of his unnecessary strictness, he is completely isolated in his own home and among members of his family. He issues out rules and others have to comply without raising any objection or ask question. One good virtue, which he possesses, is that he does not punish his children when he is in doubt about their offence. He gives priority to his male children who he values very much. He is portrayed as a loser because eventually, he lost the control of his family. Baba longs for foreign culture (Islamic religion) and modern living, a thing, his father thinks “is sweeping the whole community like wild fire”.

The character of Kaka in the text is not to be ignored. He is the sixteenth husband to Grandma, the father of Baba and the Grandfather to Li. He is a traditionalist that refuses to be influenced by the new culture introduced to the community. He is a weakling; this is because he hates many things his son (Baba) does and is unhappy with the happenings in his house. Yet he as a father cannot caution his son. He (Kaka) believes can live peacefully in the house and derive comfort in his private activities but the constant beating of children by Baba will not permit his (Kaka's) desire to come true. Kaka believes that his son – Baba is obsessed with discipline and should not cage the children. Kaka is abusive and aggressive towards Grandma – his wife. He lavishes her with insults at the slightest provocation. He divorces her thrice but each time, Grandma refuses to leave the house. He concludes that she is a barren old witch who is responsible for all the mishaps in the family.

Furthermore, another character in the text is Manu. He is a neighbour to Kaka and visits Kaka very often. He is sexually impotent which makes his young bride to speak out after which she left him. He often involves himself in the village gossips, especially those that centres on Kaka and his household. He rears livestock. His status as an important man is made public when Grandma lashes him with all manner of insults one fateful day. This happened when his goats stray and eat Grandma's corn flour. The effect of the insult is such that Manu who all the while is in Kaka's room sneaks out to go to his house.

1.10 Themes in *The Stillborn*

The writings of Alkali mostly reflect on men and women, of life journey and of womanhood. She exposes women's suffering under their husbands which include battering, shattering, wife neglect in abandonment. Other vices are discrimination against women and socio-cultural attitude which hinder women's progress, empowerment and emancipation. Her awareness of this unfair and unjustified discrimination against women in the society, is one of the reasons why the women in Alkali's text struggle for survival and independent

There are several themes in *The Stillborn*. There are major as well as minor themes which Alkali explores in the text. One of the major theme is of "male domination". The patriarchal system organized by men without consultation with women favours men and oppresses women and females generally. Some instances of oppression by men are illustrated in the harsh manner Baba treats his wife and children, especially the female children. Another instance is the way Garba treats Faku and his other wife. Garba's description of women as "slaves for me" (*The Stillborn*: 45) is derogative way of describing women, thus the men according to him (my extension) are like slaves and men

are their master. This is the kind of domination that Li and other women in the story fight against.

The theme of women liberation is another major theme in the text. It is the attempt made by women in their fight against all forms of women oppression and suppression more especially in the marriage institution. Alkali is not against marriage but wants women to relate in marriage on equal terms with men, or at least that women should be treated with respect and dignity. However, Alkali makes women to realize that this can only be possible when women are not dependent completely on men for all their provisions or basic needs. In the text, the struggle for liberation centres round three women: Li, Faku and Grandma. Grandma does not succeed in liberating herself because she has no education and cannot earn a living on her own. She has to depend on men. Li and Faku on the other hand are educated. Their education offers them the opportunity to break the bonds and barriers of oppression and suppression. They work to earn their living and fulfill their dreams of independent living (*The Stillborn*: 82).

The theme of education is yet another preoccupation in *The Stillborn*. Although it is closely tied to the theme of women liberation, because it is the avenue by which both Li and Faku achieve liberation, it is important as a theme in itself. School education enhances an individual's horizon beyond the view of the village life. It enables a person to aspire high and dream which may eventually manifest as a reality. In this respect, the more a person acquires education, the better chances of being able to view things differently. For instance, it is as a result of Li's primary education that she begins to dream of a prospective future, dreams that her marriage to Habu almost killed. But her

determination prompts her to further her education. Eventually she is self dependent. Faku, Li's friend equally gets the liberated life she pines for through education.

Furthermore, village and urban life constitute the minor themes in the text. The village life exposes life style in the village; some of which are good while others are crude. Some of the good virtues of the village life are worship, religious beliefs, social gathering such as dancing under moonlight, farming, firewood fetching, fetching water from the stream, etc. all these portray an image of harmonious co-existence and stability in the village setting. However, some nasty things such as village gossips are occasionally heard. For instance, Li's involvement with other men in the village after her husband left her for four years (The Stillborn: 60-61), Grandma makes Manu's sexual importance exposed to the general public (The Stillborn: 53). Habu is marked by failure (The Stillborn: 92), Sule makes a blacksmith's daughter pregnant and was disowned by his father (The Stillborn: 58). The negative effects of town-life are illustrated by Garba, who almost ruined Faku and Habu through the temptations of town-life (The Stillborn: 45). Garba loves the life of pleasure of the city, the availability of free women, easy money and idle living (The Stillborn: 44). In the town, women lay traps for men Habu falls into such a trap impregnates a woman, commits abortion and is forced into an unwanted marriage (The Stillborn: 91). Thus, town-life lures men to the city and ruins them.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is in three parts. Part one gives an overview of transitivity, theory of transitivity, Halliday's model of transitivity, style and transitivity and the application of transitivity to some literary works. Part two reviews literature related to the study of Alkali's *The Stillborn*. The theoretical framework for the study is presented in part three.

2.2 The Concept of Transitivity

Traditionally, transitivity is described Grammarians as the grammatical element, which indicates that a verb takes an object. It is presumed that:

- (a) If a verb takes a direct object, then it is described as transitive, and
- (b) If a verb does not take a direct object it is described as intransitive;
- (c) If a verb takes two objects, a direct and an indirect object, then it is ditransitive.

(Ayoola,2006)

However, Halliday (1985a) found a new concept of transitivity. The new concept represents a further development in language meta-function. In his conception whether a verb takes or does not take a direct object is not a prime consideration. His emphasis is on three components which he calls a "transitivity process" which are:

1. The process itself,
2. Participants in the process and
3. Circumstances associated with the process.

Transitivity process is concerned with 'a coding of goings- on: who does what in relation to whom/ what, where, when, how and why'.

2.2.1 Theory on Transitivity

The systemic functional linguistics approach to discourse analysis is based on the model of “language as a social semiotic system” as outlined in the works of Halliday (1985a). According to him, language is used functionally: what is said depends on what one needs to accomplish. In Halliday’s (1985) theory, language expresses three main kinds of meanings simultaneously: ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning. Among them, the ideational meaning (the clause as representation serves for expression of “content” in language, that is, our experience of the real world, including the experience of our inner world). When we use language we often use it to speak of something or someone doing something. That is why the ideational meaning can be referred to as experiential meaning coming from the clause as representation.

The interpersonal meaning aims to establish and maintain social relations; the individual is identified and reinforced in this aspect by enabling him/her to interact with others by expression of their own individuality. Our relationships with other people and our attitudes toward others are often expressed by interpersonal meaning. This line of meaning in a sentence structure comes from the clause serving as an exchange. People usually use language to facilitate an action or to demand an object and the expectant result is most generally gained verbally or in writing.

The textual meaning creates link between features of the text with elements in the context of situation; it refers to the manner in which a text is organized. In other words, the text meaning comes from the clause as message. The clause gets its meaning/message from its thematic structure. Halliday and Matthiesen (1976) define the theme of clauses as a “starting point of the message”. It is what the clause is about (Halliday and

Mathiesen, 1976: 64). With that, the theme serves to locate and orientate the clause within the context. The other part of the message that extends and elaborates the theme is the rheme. Therefore, a clause consists of both a theme and rheme and a theme + rheme combination will give a precise illustration on the text orientation, its idea and subject matters. Halliday also claims that the three types of meaning presented in language are not accidental but are necessarily in place because people need them to function in the society. In constructing experiential meaning, there is one major system of grammatical choice involved: the system of transitivity or process type. In his *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday argues that:

A fundamental property of language is that it enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them... our most powerful conception of reality is that it consist of “goings-on”: of doing, happening, feeling, being. These goings-on are sorted out in the semantic system of language, and expressed through the grammar of the clause. Parallel with this evolution in the function of mood, expressing the active, interpersonal aspect of meaning, the clause evolved simultaneously in another grammatical function expressing the reflective, experiential aspect of meaning. This latter is the system of TRANSITIVITY. Transitivity specifies the different types of processes that are recognized in the language and the structures by which they are expressed (Halliday, 1985:101).

The theory of transitivity was developed generally to refer to how meaning is represented in clauses. Transitivity patterns can reveal certain world view “framed by the authorial ideology” in literary text (Fowler, 1986: 136). Clauses represent events and processes of various kinds, and transitivity aims to make clear how the action is performed, by whom and on what. Transitivity is an important and powerful semantic concept. As earlier mentioned, it is part of the ideational function of language. Therefore, it is an essential tool in the analysis of representation.

Implicitly and crucially, different social structures and values acquire different patterns of transitivity. Kress (1976) states that transitivity is a representation in language process, Hassan (1993) claims 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, participants, and the circumstances pertinent to the process-participant configuration. In other words, transitivity is measurable and will be used to study the clausal structure which is based on the main verb of the sentence. According to this theory, different processes are distinguished according to whether they represent actions, speech, states of mind or state of being.

2.2.2 Halliday's Transitivity Model

According to Halliday (1985a: 101) there are three kinds of grammar in English, these are: 'theme – grammar of discourse', 'mood – grammar of speech function', and 'transitivity – grammar of experience'. He also defines transitivity as 'the grammar of the clause as 'a structural unit' for expressing a particular range of ideational meanings. In the transitivity system, there are eight types of process as earlier mentioned. These are material, mental, relational, behavioural, verbal, existential, beneficiary and range. The table below shows the transitivity the model of the processes.

Table 2.2.2.1: Types of Processes, Category meaning and Participants

	Process type	Category meaning	Participants
1.	Material (a) Action (b) Event	‘doing’ ‘doing’ ‘happening’	Actor, goal
2	Mental	‘sensing’ ‘seeing’ ‘sensing’ ‘Thinking’	Phenomenon
3	Relational (a) Attribution (a) Identification	‘being’ ‘attributing’ ‘identifying’	Token, value Carrier, attribute Identified, identifier
4	Behavioural	‘behaving’	Behaver
5	Verbal	‘saying’	Sayer, target
6	Existential	‘existing’	Existent

(Halliday, 1981:131)

It is imperative to note that the examples in the tables below are the researcher’s own.

2.2.2.1 Material Process: Process of doing

Material process is process of ‘doing’ – performing an action. It expresses the notion that some entity ‘does’ something – which may be done ‘to’ some other entity. It is also a process of ‘happening’ or ‘occurrence’ – an event. It expresses the notion that some entity ‘carries out’ something which may occur ‘in’ some other entity. In the material process, there are two participants role; referred to as the actor and goal, for example:

Table 2.2.2.2: Identification of Participants and Material Process in a Sentence

Li	built	a house
Actor	Process	Goal

2.2.2.2Mental Process: Process of sensing involves

- i. Perception (hearing, seeing, etc)
- ii. Affection (liking, fearing, etc)
- iii. Cognition (thinking, knowing, understanding etc)

There are two participants in the mental processes. They are: senser (the conscious being that is feeling, thinking, or seeing) and phenomenon (which is ‘sensed’ – felt, thought or seen). Here is an illustration of the above.

Table 2.2.2.3: Identification of Mental Process in a Sentence

I	Trust	You
Senser	Process cognition	Phenomenon

2.2.2.3Relational Process: Process of being

There are three types of relational process, namely:

- i. Intensive ‘x’ is ‘a’ (establishes a relationship of sameness between two entities).
- ii. Circumstantial ‘x’ is at ‘a’ (defines the entity in terms of location, time, manner).
- iii. Possessive ‘x’ has ‘a’ (indicates that one entity owns another).

Each of these comes in two modes:

(a) Attributive (‘a’ is an attribute of ‘x’)

In this mode, there are two participants, namely: carrier and attribute.

(b) Identifying (‘a’ is the identity of ‘x’).

In this mode, there are two participants: identified and identifier.

Below are the six possible classifications of relational process in terms of mode.

Table 2.2.2.4: Classification of Relational Process in terms of Mode

Mode	Attributive	(ii) Identifying
1. Intensive	The performance is great.	Alhaji Bature is her suitor. Her Suitor is Alhaji Bature.
2. Circumstantial	The tutorial is on a Tuesday.	Today is the fifteenth. The fifteenth is today.
3. Possessive	Garba has two wives.	The two wives are Garba's. Garba's are the two wives.

The table below shows other examples of the relational process modes and their types.

Table of Attributive classes.

Table 2.2.2.5: Examples of Relational Process, Modes and their Types

Attribute of:	Carrier	Process	Attribute
Quantity (intensive)	Musa	is/looks	Great
Circumstance (circumstantial)	David The festivities	Was Last	in the library all day.
Possession (possessive)	The Motorbike Adamu Adamu	is/belongs has	Adamu's/to Adamu. a Motorbike

Table 2.2.2.6: Table of identifying

Identification by:	Identified	Process	Identifier
Token-value (intensive)	Faku HM	Is Drove	the Welfare officer. the car.
Circumstance (circumstantial)	Wednesday his diamond	Was takes up	the first. the entire box.
Possession (possessive)	The goat Grandma	Is Owns	Grandma's the goat.

2.2.3.4 Behavioural process

Behavioural process stands between material and mental processes. Because of this, some people find it difficult to distinguish between behavioural process verbs and material

process verbs on one hand, and between behavioural process verbs, and mental process verbs on the other hand.

For easy identification of behavioural process, it is imperative to note that a behavioural process verb is:

- a) Intransitive (it has only one participant) and
- b) Indicates an activity in which both the physical and mental aspects are inseparable and indispensable to it.

In this process there is only one participant, also known as behavior (the agent who behaves). Example

Table 2.2.2.7: Identification of participant and behavioural process in a Sentence

Awa	neither sings nor dances
Behaver	Process

2.2.3.5 Verbal Process

The verbal process is a process of saying or its synonyms. The participants of the process are: sayer (participant who speaks), receiver (the one to whom the verbalization is addressed, **verbiage** (a name for the verbalization itself). There is however one other type of verbal process, in which the sayer is in sense acting verbally on another direct participant, with verbs such as praise, slander, insult abuse and flatter. The **other** participant will be referred to as the **target**. The table is an illustration:

Table 2.2.2.8: Examples of Participants and Verbal Process

We	Asked	him	a lot of question
Sayer	Process: verbal	Receiver	Verbiage

For target

Table 2.2.2.8b

They	are always flattering	You	to my siblings
Sayer	Process: verbal	Target	Recipient

2.2.3.6 Existential process

This process demonstrates that something exists or happens. They usually take the verb to be or some other verb expressing existence, such as arise, which is often followed by a nominal group functioning as existent (a thing which exists in the process). The existent may be a phenomenon of any kind, and is often, in fact, an event. For example:

There	Was	a lightening
	Process	Existent: event

2.2.3.7 Other participant functions

There are two other types of participant functions. These are: beneficiary and range. Beneficiary is the one to whom or for whom the process is said to take place. It appears in material and verbal process. For example:

Table 2.2.2.10: Identification of Process, Beneficiary and Examples

Process	Beneficiary function	Example (the underlined)
Material	(a) The recipient, is one that goods are given to (b) The client, is one that services are done for	(a) I gave <u>my love</u> a ring (b) Shehu washed all the clothes for <u>his father</u>
Verbal	The one who is addressed	Grandma said to <u>kaka</u>

Range is the element that specifies the scope or range of the process. A range may occur in material and verbal processes. For example:

Process	Range function	Example (the underlined)
Material	(a) Expresses the domain over which the process takes place (b) Expresses the process itself	(a) Habu climbed <u>the tree</u> . (b) Hassan <u>blew</u> the whistle.
Verbal	The element expressing the quality class or quantity of what is said	She wrote <u>a long</u> essay

2.2.2.8 Circumstantial Elements

These are more like the traditional adverbs. The examples below explain its various categories:

Table 2.2.2.11: Types of Circumstantial Elements, their categories and examples

S/N	Types	Categories	Examples
1.	Extent	(a) Distant (b) Duration	(a) Baba walks (for) <u>ten miles</u> (b) The Visitor stayed for <u>one hour</u>
2.	Location	(a) Place (b) Time	(a) They work in <u>the town</u> (b) She gets up at <u>five o'clock</u>
3.	Manner	(a) Comparison (b) Quality (c) Means	(a) It went through my head <u>like</u> a thunderstorm (b) It was raining <u>heavily</u> (c) My niece went by <u>bus</u>
4.	Cause	(a) Purpose (b) Behalf (c) Reason	(a) For the sake of <u>peace</u> ... (b) I'm writing on behalf of <u>my cousin</u> (c) <u>For want of money</u> her integrity was lost
5.	Accompaniment	(a) Additive (b) Commutative	(a) Aisha came with Hafsat <u>and another young lady</u> (b) Aisha came with Hafsat her friend
6.	Matter		We worry about his health
7.	Role		He is speaking as <u>your employer</u>

From the tables and explanations above, suffice that transitivity system can effectively analyse sentences (structures). Process and participants analysis of a text reveals the way language users manipulate language to represent their perceptions of reality (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 107-109).

The transitivity system can also help the users of language to express their experience, or what Bloor and Bloor (1995) refer to as representation of perception of reality.

According to Halliday (1985b: 101):

A fundamental property of language is that it enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them...

Transitivity specifies the different types of process that are recognized in the language, and the structures by which they are expressed.

From the above quotation, we can conclude that by transitivity system we can know exactly all the processes in a language; and also we can know exactly how human beings state their experience in the world. The examples below illustrate this:

(i) Material process

“Musa and Hassan went to the village to build their house”

Table 2.2.2.1.1: Identification of Participants, processes and circumstance in Material Process

Musa and Hassan	Went	to the village	to build	their house
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance	Process: material	Goal

2. Mental process and verbal process

“Lilian said she guessed you would believe her next time” (‘guessed’ is a mental process)

Table 2.2.2.1.2: Identification of mental and Verbal processes

Lilian	Said	She	Guessed
Sayer	Process: verbal	Senser	Process: cognition

You	Would believe	Her	next time
Senser	Process: cognition	Phenomenon	Circumstance: extent

The examples above show that through the transitivity system we can know the process exactly. In sum, transitivity is also used to analyse reference case (reference case is a part of grammatical cohesion).

In the words of Halliday and Hassan, (1976: 310)

The question of the interpretation of reference terms in context of potential ambiguity has begin to be studied. Here the question is, how does the listener or reader identifies which of the two or more possible items in the text a reference item refers to. For example, if we come across a sentence such as:
'Spurs played Liverpool. They beat them! How do we know who beat who?

From the above, it is observed that there is a case of personal reference in contexts of potential ambiguity. Halliday and Hassan (1976) say that the case can be solved by the transitivity system. For example:

A. Kano Pillars played Rangers. They beat them.

Kano Pillars	Played	Rangers
Actor	Process material	Goal

They	Beat	Them
Actor	Process material	Goal

B. The police chased the thieves. They caught them

The police	Chased	the thieves
Actor	Process material	Goal

They	Caught	Them
Actor	Process material	Goal

The examples show that the case can be solved; and after the case is analyzed by transitivity, we exactly know who refers to whom. However, we have to be careful of this case, because a reference case is a semantic relation case. Hence, we also need to analyse the meaning first. In sum, transitivity system specifies different types of process that are recognized in the language and the structures by which they are expressed. In transitivity system, there are six processes (as mentioned earlier) – material, mental, relational, verbal, existential and behavioural. It is also a system that can solve the case of personal reference in contexts of potential ambiguity.

2.2.3 Style and Transitivity

Style and transitivity are subsumes in stylistics. Therefore, it is imperative to look at the concept of stylistics. Stylistics is a branch of linguistic which is considered to have as many varied definitions as it has applications. Bradford (1997) views stylistics as an attempt to establish principles capable of explaining the particular choice used by an individuals and social groups in their use of language. Lawal (1997) state that stylistics is a branch of linguistics that studies varieties of language, its properties and the principles behind choice, dialogue, accent, length and register. According to Widdowson (1975):

Stylistics is the study and interpretation of text from a linguistics perspective. It is a discipline that has bearing with literary criticism and linguistics but has no autonomous domain of its own. The focal point in stylistics is literature though it studies

other forms of written text such as texts from field of advertisement, politics, religion, pop-culture, among others.

Furthermore, stylistics attempts to establish principles that are capable of explaining sentence structure in grammar. For instance, the active and the passive voice, the distribution of sentence lengths, the use of particular registers and so on in a given language in speech or writing. Turner (1973) defines stylistics as “that part of linguistic which concentrates on variation in the use of language with special attention to the most conscious complex use of language. This definition stresses writers’ or speakers’ consciousness in their use of language Osundare (2003) points out three different views of stylistics as (a) choice (b) difference which include variation and deviation and (c) iteration. The implication of Osundare’s assertion is that stylistics is concerned among other thing with the choice of words in the language employed by speakers or writers, how these words are used in various ways which sometimes result to a shift in their literary meanings (connotation) and how meanings are enhanced through repetition of some words. In sum, one can draw conclusion that stylistics is an aspect of linguistics that studies language variation informed by certain factors. It is an area of study that is not just limited to the study of written language but the spoken aspect as well which is concerned with the analysis and description linguistics features of texts in relation to their meanings. Cuddon (1998:87) adds that “stylistics is an analytical science which covers all the expressive aspects of language: phonology, prosody, morphology, syntax and lexicology”.

From the aforementioned, we can say that style is the different ways a writer or speaker reveals himself or herself in writing or speech; the budge of individuality that distinguishes a good writer or speaker from a poor mediocre one. Crystal and Davy

(1969) see style as “the language habit of a person”. These scholars (Crystal and Davy) view style as language peculiar to an individual or group of people either at a point in time or over a period of time. They further add that style is a literary language which is often described as personal therefore, there is no standard style that every writer or speaker must follow. Suffice to say that style is the way, manner and method of things like writing or speaking is done. It is a distinctive way of speech or writing where language is manipulated in an artistic and creative manner. Cuddon (1998:873) sums it up by stating that:

Style is the characteristic manner of expression in prose or verse: how a particular writer says things. The analysis and assessment of style involves examination of writer’s choice of words, his figures of speech, the devices (rhetorical and otherwise), the shape of his paragraph indeed of every conceivable aspect of his language and the way in which he uses it.

Style variation is the various changes in the use of style by writers or speakers which may manifest in language variation or even narrative techniques. This occurs in diverse degrees. The implication therefore follows that there is a “well” that harbours various styles from which writers or speakers draw from to embellish their works of art or other issues that have bearing with language and communication. Language, for the sake of style variation in narratives can emerge in different forms – standard, non-standard, dialect, and idiolect; all for the sake of introducing colouration in the literary work.

Narratives involves a recapitulation of felt experience using language, it is a spoken or written account or event. Usually, it comes in a story-telling form (Ocheke, 2010). Narrative which tends to capture events as they occur in their natural order (chronology), sometimes, reverse the perceived and expected sequence all in a bid to vary

style probably to achieve a desired goal. Expectedly, in narratives, one incident brings to fore the other, but for the sake of style variation, this order may be twisted, hence, some narratives start “in medes res” a Greek word which means “in the middle of narrative.” Narrative requires development, elaboration, embellishment and a sufficient degree of stylistic flourish to give it the needed imprint of individuality says Ocheke. He concludes by adding that “any story without such flourish is view as dull, flat and tasteless”. Labov (1972) cited in Simpson (2004) argues that narratives requires certain essential elements of structure which when absent render the narrative “ill-formed”. Some of these elements he says are: sufficient contextualization, dramatic or rhetoric embellishment, sense of finality among others, should feature prominently. Therefore, there is more to narratives than just content or a sequence of basic clauses.

In life, there are a lot of “goings-on” or happenings, actions and events, thoughts and perceptions. They all sharpen and define one’s daily experience. These issues essentially need to be encoded by the use of language to fulfill the experimental functions which is in itself a vital marker of style. Halliday (1994) puts it that there are many ways of accounting in language for the various events that constitute our, “mental picture of reality”. Many ways abound by which the resource of language system can be utilized to capture the same event in a textual representation. The style employed in a narrative has a profound impact on how texts are structured and interpreted.

Alkali’s style of writing reflects “ideas and attitudes”, which can be defined as feminists on the one hand and naturalistic. On the other hand, her use of language is clearly seen as the infiltration of the English language on her mother-tongue. Examples:

“May we live to see tomorrow” (*The Stillborn*: 33). This denotes hope of a new day; “daughter of my mother” (*The Stillborn*: 56). This denotes my sister.

The linguistic choices in the text reflect the position of women as subservient. The author’s style of using local expressions in her language enhanced and embellished the language in the text. She particularly adopts the traditional speech patterns of socio-cultural-background and transliterates these into English in unique ways. It is also observed that the strength of the author’s style lies in the simplicity of her choice of diction and her descriptive ability.

Furthermore, in the novel, we see the author jocosely presents an odd woman who is ready to challenge the men in their ridiculous game of acquiring many wives. We cannot help but imagine the underlying sarcasm with which the author presents a stark old illiterate woman who would rather gloat over her fourteen attempts to hook a man than to possess a degree or work in any organization.

As mentioned earlier in this work, style is individualistic and is subject to no standard. In an attempt to describe style and transitivity, an American novelist, James (2001) cited in Simpson (2004: 74) once posed a pair of rhetorical questions: ‘what is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? The combination of ‘character’ and ‘incident’ may at first seem a curious alignment, but when we take a closer look at it, it suggests that James’ formula serves very much as a yardstick on the analysis of transitivity in prose narratives. In narrative works, the principal mode of narrative characterization is the transmission of ‘actions’ and ‘events’. This mode refers to the way character is developed through and by the semantic processes and participant roles embodied in narrative discourse. For instance, a

character may be determined by degree of influence on narrative incidents, by degree of active involvement in the forward momentum of the plot.

On the other hand, character may be determined by detachment from narrative incident, by the positioning, for example, the portrayal of a character as a passive observer of the events that unfold around them. Transitivity is the linguistic framework which encompasses this aspect of narrative organization (Simpson, 2004). According to Simpson (2004:75) stylisticians have over the years had referred regularly to the transitivity models in their analyses of text mostly in their analyses of narrative text. Halliday's (1971: 149) study is recognized as one of the key essays in modern stylistics. He is the architect of the model of transitivity.

2.4.4 Developments in the Analysis of Style and Transitivity

2.2.4.1 Halliday's Application of the Model of Transitivity on William Golding's Novel – *The Inheritors*

Halliday (1971) cited in Simpson (2004) applies the theory to William Golding's novel *The Inheritors*. He explores the linguistic patterns which encode the 'mind style' of the various Neanderthal peoples in the story. The bulk of the story is narrated from the perspective of Lok, one of the primitive groups of Neanderthals, while the later part of the book reveals Lok and his people a tribe that is supplanted by a more advanced tribe. Here, Halliday argues that 'choices in transitivity reflect this transition'. He further explains that the behaviour of Lok's tribe is depicted as discontinuous rather aimless, where physical action rarely affects objects in the immediate environment. Lok's language, in more explicitly experiential terms, is marked consistently by material processes which realize an Actor element but no Goal element (object). Examples: 'A stick rose upright'. The bushes twisted'; these Goal-less processes make the action

specified seem self engendered, even when it is clear from the narrative context that they are brought about by the external emergency of Lok's enemies. Lok's failure to see a 'joined up' world of actions and events is therefore conveyed through systematic choices in transitivity, although no such failure in understanding is embodied by the transitivity patterns of the more advanced tribe whose way of configuring the world is, according to Halliday (1971: 351), more like our own. (They-the advanced tribe use sentences with goal element (object.)

In the view of Simpson (2004: 75), Halliday's study is important in many ways. By using the narrative discourse as a test site for a particular model of language, it illustrates well the usefulness of stylistic analysis as a means of exploring both language and literature. It also brings to the fore how intuitions and hunches about a text can be explored systematically and with rigors using retrievable procedure of analysis.

2.2.4.2 Kennedy's Application of transitivity model on Joseph Conrad's Novel '*The Secret Agent*'

According to Simpson (2004), what interests Kennedy most is the manner by which Mr. Verloc's death is described. For example; throughout the novel of well over four hundred pages, no mental processes at all attributed to Mrs. Verloc, giving little if any indication of what this character thinks, feels or perceives. This is quite striking. Though many of the material processes prescribed to her are Goal-less for example; she started forward...' she had passed on towards the sofa...' Mrs Verloc is thus represented as a character whose actions are done without reflection and without directly affecting the entities (including her husband) that surround her.

The pattern of transitivity which defines Mr. Verloc is rather different. He participates in a few non-goal directed material processes, such as 'He waited...', 'He

was lying on his back on the sofa...' In fact, some of these sequences like 'he stared at the ceiling', is coded in later version of the transitivity model as behavioural processes. The overwhelming majority of the processes ascribed to Mr. Verloc are mental processes which feature him in the role of sensor and which include a phenomenon element. For example: 'Mr. Verloc heard the creaky plank in the floor'. He saw partly on the ceiling and partly on the wall the moving shadow of an arm; 'Mr. Verloc recognized the limb and the weapon'. Thus, Verloc is portrayed as someone who is thoroughly aware of everything; that joining on around him, yet in spite of his mental acuity, paradoxically, is unable to instigate the action necessary to prevent his own death.

2.2.4.3 Ibrahim's Application of transitivity on Nawal el Saadawi's Novel – 'God Dies by the Nile'

On her part, Ibrahim (2011) did an analysis of power relations in discourse. The study is an investigation into Borton's analysis of power relations using Halliday's transitivity system. The researcher's objective is to revise previous postulations that Nawal el Saadawi's *God Dies by the Nile* is a socialist feminist text. It also explores ways of developing a suitable analytical framework to give a much deeper analysis of novels written by women. The researcher achieves this by bringing out gaps and "silence" in the text. As such, rejects earlier simplistic interpretations of the text as a homogenous whole. The study also explores the possibility of power being distributed between male and female characters through the use of Halliday's transitivity system (Ibrahim, 2011:14). The researcher also argues that it is not only by depicting women as oppressed that one makes a feminist text. The researcher explains further that the presences of feminist issues is not sufficient to make a text feminist, but rather how these issues are presented in the body of the text. Again, the findings suggest that the relationship between sexuality

and power is intricately linked to negotiations of power positions by the characters. The study also shows that it is people involved in a given interaction who create positions of power for themselves that female characters unlike their male counterparts were likely to resist instances of power which interference with women's freedom (Ibrahim 2011).

The book concludes by arguing that though *God dies by the Nile* presents issues of feminist concern, it is not a feminist novel. According to this researcher, the text focuses on the thoughts and actions of men, especially the protagonist – 'Major' (Ibrahim 2011:186). Furthermore, the text concludes that, analyzing language in relation to power, it is worthwhile to apply Halliday's explanations on interpersonal function in a given interaction, though the system cannot account for some of the complexities of power relations.

2.3 Previous Studies on Alkali's *The Stillborn*

As far as available data reveal, there have been much studies devoted to *The Stillborn* from feminist point of view (thematic and literary focus) and a dearth from sociolinguistic perspective. Records also reveal that there have been a number of works done on the text generally. As a literary text, one can research into any of its aspects depending on one's interest and intent. Researchers such as Zakariya (in Yerima et al, 2012), Azuike (2003), Umar (2009), Odinye (2002), Ewuru (2011) and Hellandendu (2011) have worked on *The Stillborn* and their researches have focused on different aspects.

Zakariya's work cited in (Ahmed et al., 2012) is a socio-cultural study of the text. This work investigates the plight of Africa women in a patriarchal society. It reveals the fierce struggle of women against cultural traditions and class privileges. The study finds

out that there is a prescribed level of education for women (the highest is the grade seven) which the major character – Li was able to attain. It also shows that women may have dreams beyond marriage and house wife chores-a dictate of natural practice in a male dominated society. The study concludes by projecting the social trauma of countless Nigerian women. Although Zakariya tells us by bringing to fore, the plight of African women in a male dominated society; she fails to pay attention to the use of language. Also, she focuses her attention on ‘Li’ the major character relegating the other characters to the background. Thus the present research investigates these areas.

Azuike’s (2003: 19) work on *The Stillborn* is a radical feminist work. This study shows that language in a patriarchal society readily reflects the place of women as subservient. According to the researcher:

The studies of male and female patterns of communication in Alkali’s texts reveal that husband/men speak to their wives/women with more authority or power than necessary in an atmosphere of cordiality, which the home should represent (Azuike, 2003: 40).

The work also reveals that gender practice and language are reinforced by siblings, by parents and members of the society. Like Zakariya (2012) this study portrays the experiences of women in a heliocentric male dominated society, and their struggle to overcome their problems; women are basically the subordinate group. The work also identifies Alkali’s altruistic support and encouragement of the African women to further their studies and train well for the profession of their choice. The study aims at presenting to the readers, a time image of the modern African women in the picture that the author paints of Li, the heroine in the text. In the study, education is identified as the ultimate “weapon” for women liberation. Furthermore, the study reveals that Alkali’s works are subversive works which speak on the surface of women powerlessness yet celebrate their

power. It concludes by adding that the text-*the stillborn* is arguably a documentation of Alkali's childhood days which leads her to adolescence and adulthood. Just like Zakariya (2012) this study does not give any account of the linguistic property of the text; and the focal point is on the protagonist.

Umar's (2009) study is a literary appreciation of feminist portrayal of male characters in Alkali's *The Stillborn* and *Cobweb and Other Stories*. For the purpose of the study; Umar categorized the male characters into two groups; the young male generation and the old male generation. The study focuses on the portrayal of the old male generation; though the young male generation characters are described as adulterous, drunkards, irresponsible and to some extent lazy men. The research establishes that the old generation male character (which is depicted in the persona-Baba; Li's father) is an unnecessarily authoritative, rigid and conservative, whose rules and regulations (even though considered as "stupid") must be adhered to strictly. The study also shows that Baba imposes rather than instilling discipline behaviour on members of his family, especially the young ones. Hence, his effort is described as unnecessarily rigid and unproductive. The study equally finds out that Baba is completely isolated in his own home and among his family members. This nature of isolation is described as confrontational posture that is: 'I verses them'. According to the study, this resulted to a one 'way 'traffic' communication, where Baba dishes out the rules and the others have to comply without question or objection. The research also tells us that the old generation male character in the text is portrayed as a loser whose rare virtue is that he does not punish his family members when he is in doubt. Kaka (Baba's father) is another old generation male character in the text. Umar's work identifies Kaka as a passive character;

whose quest for peaceful atmosphere stops him from reprimanding his son and other members of the extended family when there is the need to do so.

The study concludes by identifying the fact that Alkali does not encourage divorce despite her negative portrayal of male characters. This, it explains is not unconnected to the fact that male and female need each other. The study recognizes the writer's provisions of viable options and solutions to the African women who may find themselves in dilemma in their matrimonial or social lives. It also shows the Writer's belief in the family system and regards it as one of the most important unit in the human society. Though Umar's study focuses on the portrayal of characters in the text, he limited his work to the portrayal of male characters and does not relate it to how it aids the realization of the thematic preoccupation of the text or otherwise.

Ewuru (2011) did a feminist aesthetic analysis of *The Stillborn* and the virtuous woman. This is, to some extent similar to Azuike (2003: 15), which is a radical feminist analysis. The study examines the extent of the marginalization of the African women in a sexist society which relegates womanhood to gender roles. The aim of the study is to examine and emphasized the ideological production of femininity as 'other' of 'real' subject and to discover their true selves. It also examines the theme of female oppression by men as well as the struggle by women for emancipation. The study points out that in African culture; women have been subjected to oppression, depression, suppression, rejection and segregation as well as unfair and undue victimizations (Ewuru, 2011:11). The study reveals that in the text, female characters are placed higher than the male characters. This it explains is as a result of the inequality in the society. That is, giving women upper hand in the society (Ewuru, 2011:34).

Ewuru (2011) concludes the research by showing that there is a need to re-evaluate and re-define gender roles in African society in order to establish mutual complementarity between men and women. It recommends that both sexes should be equally trained for joy motherhood to be fully realized. Furthermore, the study identifies that education underscores a fundamental necessity for mental and material liberation of women from male domination. Though Ewuru, just like Azuike (2003) discusses the thematic preoccupations of the writer from the stand point of characters like Li, Faku and Awa, she does not bring to fore, the personality of the character of Grandma, neither does she mention the function of language in the portrayal of the characters towards the development and attainment of the writer's thematic focus.

In contrast to all the previous works, Hellandendu (2008) does a comparative linguistic analysis of Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn* and George Orwell's *The Animal Farm*. The study reveals that modifiers make a difference between a dull sentence and an interesting one. The work also shows that modifiers 'breath life' into phrases, clause, sentences and the entire paragraph of a text. It points out that modifiers are used for contrasts, emphasis, descriptions and for shades of meaning. Therefore, when used appropriately they enrich both syntactic and semantic meanings of sentence. The study shows the relationships that exist between the modifiers identified with headwords and gives a detail explanation of each sentence in the course of the analysis (Hellandendu, 2011: 63-80). The study identifies adverbs, adjectives, prepositional phrases, quantifiers and intensifiers, qualifiers, idioms, adjectival and adverbial clauses as the components of modification that are considered for analysis. The study is set out to determine whether adjectives and adjectival clauses are more extensively used than adverbs and adverbial

clauses as well as prepositional phrases, comparative and superlative adjectives. It also tries to determine the extent to which poetic and idiomatic expressions are used to modify the works of Alkali and Orwell. And finally, to determine whether gender has effect on the text a writer creates.

The study concludes by revealing that though both writers employed the same style of both pre-modification and post modification in the texts under analysis; Alkali has used more modifiers than Orwell. She used more adjectives and adjectival clauses than Orwell while Orwell has used more adverb and adverbial clauses than Alkali. Furthermore, Alkali used more intensifiers than Orwell. The study suggests that women use more emotive language than men and that gender has effect on the creation of text.

Though, Hellandendu's study is similar to the current study from the stand point of linguistics, it is an eclectic study of Halliday's (1985a) systematic functional linguistics and Bloodfields (1933) immediate constituent (IC) analysis which provides semantic and syntactic co-occurrence of modifiers and the headwords in novel structure. The current study is imperative then as it focuses on the meta-functions of language in the development of characters and how this enhances the writer's preoccupation.

Odinye's (2002) interest is rooted in feminism. Her study focuses on feminism and self assertion of female characters in Emecheta's second class citizen and Alkali's *The Stillborn*. The work shows that African women in many African countries are faced with the greatest barrier of becoming self-fulfilled – in a socio-cultural sphere where they (women) are the quiet members of the community and their homes. The study also tells us that women are financially dependent on the husbands and at the same time bear children and take care of the families; a set regarded as inferior to men physically and

intellectually. The study also reveals that today, women have started showing resentment on the limitation meted on them by the society. And such, they have become consciously aware of their plight and have started asking questions as well as putting up a fight for their right.

Odinye's work shows that the result of this conscious awareness is the fight for recognition of their (women) rights in the society. Furthermore, the work adds that the female characters in *The Stillborn*, assert themselves in different ways. Some decided to leave their husbands or fight back. Li and her friend Faku decided to leave their husband to acquire education which later gave them the opportunity to become literate. Odinye concludes her work by suggesting that women should not be taken as underdogs; they also tried to portray that "what a man can do, a woman can do it better" but with humility and self-worth. The work rejected all forms or norms of society that restricted women from their goals and aspirations, and portrayed them to live their lives as human being. She appreciates Alkali for presenting women as assertive women so as to give hope to all African women. However, she fails to pay attention to the linguistic elements employed by the writer to portray this self assertion.

However, the studies above have all failed to discuss the importance of character portrayal in the text which is very significant to the interpretation and understanding of literary work. Works of prose must have a character or characters whose actions, inactions and interactions help in facilitating the development of the story. They act out the events recounted by the author. Characters can represent human beings, animals, inanimate objects, etc used by writer to transport his/her message to the reader, hence this

study contributes to existing literature in this respect by showing how the author used the transitivity processes to construct and portray the personality of a character.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for the analysis is Halliday's transitivity model. It is a linguistic theory that operates in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The systemic model was developed in the 1950s by the British linguist M.A.K. Halliday and his associate -Matthiesen (Halliday, 1985). It is a theory that focuses on how human beings build a mental picture of the world of reality using various processes. In other words, it is concerned with mental interpretation of action in relation to who performed the action and on whom/what, where the action was carried out, why and how. Its immediate antecedent was J.R. Firth (1950). Firth focuses on the textual theory of meaning which was initially crocheted to an anthropologist Brorislav Malainowski. This model or theory philosophically sees language essentially as a social phenomenon or a sociological construct which facilitates communication among people. As a result, the emphasis is on the contextual interpretation of utterance.

The theory or model also views language as an avenue for making meaning like experiential meaning which overestimates what is going on in the context of situation. Textual meaning examines when and how language has been used effectively in a written form (Fairclough, 2003), while interpersonal meaning deals with patterns of dialogues and attitude; that is the roles participants play as they use language in their interaction-through different processes. These processes are: Material process- a process of doing, happening. Relational Process – process of 'being' 'attributing' and 'identifying'; Behavioural process – a psychological and physiological process of laughing, crying;

Mental process – a process of sensing seeing, thinking; Verbal process – a process of saying, existential process – a process of existing. It is on the basis of the above that the researcher has deemed the theory fit for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology for this work. It contains explanation on how the data used for the study were collected and the sampling technique used. It sums up with a discussion of the analytical framework.

3.2 Research Design

This study is basically content analysis of the utterances, thoughts, actions of Grandma and other characters that she interacts with as well as the narrator's accounts of Grandma in *The Stillborn* using transitivity theory as proposed by Halliday (1985a) in six classifications of transitivity processes. There is no use of interviews or questionnaires. It is imperative to note that transitivity shows how speakers/writers encode in language their mental reflection of the world and how they account for their experience of the world around them. This approach to discourse is based on the model of language as a social semiotic which is a powerful vehicle in the construction of social reality (Fairclough, 2003).

3.3 Data Collection Method

The data for this work were collected from two sources: primary and secondary sources. The primary source is *The Stillborn*. The data are sourced directly from the selected text through a comprehensive study of the novel. In other words, in the process of reading the text the researcher extracted all the necessary data from the text. That is,

the utterances, of the characters, their thoughts and actions as well as the narrator's accounts.

The secondary source includes the internet, related corpora and the use of ethnography. According to discourse analysts, ethnographic technique refers to all techniques that involve the use of written reports or records on the behaviour, belief, attitudes, norms, understanding and values of a group of interacting people (Hymes, 1971 in Adeyi, 2012). We are concerned with the ethnography of the Hausa people and their culture as captured in the text under study. We know that language is a part of a people's culture. English language which is the focus here, is been domesticated to the extent that it has become part of the culture of the Hausa people like any other group of people in Nigeria. In adapting the English language of the Hausa cultural terrain, existing cultural norms and belief of the Hausa nation do have significant impact in directing English usage.

3.4 Sample

A sample is a microcosm of a larger population. In other words, it is the selection of a specific portion of the population for the purpose of research and analysis. The population may be too large or infinite to be studied or the researcher may not have adequate time and resources to study the entire population therefore, the researcher selects and study a fair portion of the whole population as a representation of the whole

It is on this premise that the researcher from the data collected from *The Stillborn*, focused on the utterances, thoughts, actions of Grandma and those of other characters that she interacts with as well as the narrator's accounts. The text used language of varying structures to build up the characters in the text through various methods. One of the

methods is through the physicals description of characters. Another method is the provision of information about the way characters walk-mannerism, think, speak and how characters interact with one another provide information that enables the readers to decide the kind of personality the character has. Therefore, the researcher focused only on the character of Grandma. The reason for this is that Grandma, though an illiterate, plays a vital role in the development and the attainment of the author's preoccupation. Again, Grandma is a character whose recognition is insufficient in academic works. Another reason is the time of this research. It came at the appropriate time; a time when there is consistent increase in women emancipation awareness in our country- Nigeria and in Africa at large.

The language of Grandma in her utterances, thoughts, and actions together with the opinions of other characters as well as the narrator's accounts are used for this research. The selection of this character is to provide an academic work where emphasis will shift from the heroine (Li). Hence, purposive sampling technique is employed in this research. Purposive sampling is a process of selection that allows the researcher to select data to be included in the study based on their usefulness to the study. The novel is written in nine chapters. Grandma featured in the first six chapters. The selected six extracts for this research are those focusing on the characters concerned. In all the sum of 207 clause representations (clause listening) from the six extracts were analysed.

3.5 Analytical Framework

This is a study of language in use. The use of language in Halliday grammar is 'functional' in the sense that it is designed to account for how language is used and this 'use' shaped system of language which has evolved to satisfy human needs (Halliday,

1985a). Ibrahim (2011) sees language as a system of options which in systematic grammar, different systems are recognized. Included in these systems in English, is transitivity, which was propounded by M.A.K. Halliday. It “construes the world of experience into a manageable set of process types” (Halliday, 1994:10b). This process “centres on that part of the clause that is realized by the verbal group, but can also be regarded as what (event) is represented in the whole clause” (Bloor and Bloor, 1995:110). According to this system – transitivity, different processes are distinguished according to whether they represent actions, speech, state of mind or state of being existence. They are material, mental, verbal, relational, behavioural, existential, beneficiary and range (Halliday, 2004). However, the interest here is on the first six processes. These are discussed below.

Material process of transitivity use processes of doing, usually physical and tangible actions. Halliday describes them as action clauses expressing them that something or someone undertakes some action or some entity “does” something – which may be done to some other entity. These processes can be probed by asking ‘what did X do?’ Two essential participants that usually appear in material process are the Actor – the doer of the process – and the goal – the person or entity affected by the process. It is also the process that determines whether a participant (character) is a strong and active or weak one. Mental processes usually encode mental reactions such as perception, feelings and thoughts. Mental process gives an insight into people’s (characters|) consciousness and how they sense the experience of reality. These can be probed by asking ‘what do you think, feel know about X? Mental processes have two participants; the senser – the conscious being who is involved in a mental process – and the phenomenon – which is

felt, thought or seen by the conscious senser. Relational processes construe the relationships of being and having between two participants. There are two different types of relational processes; one is called identifying relational which senses the purpose of defining and the participants involved are Token and Value. Thus the value serves to define identity of the Token. The other type of relational process is the attributive relational which serves to describe. The participants associated with it are carrier and the attribute and we can say that “the X (realized law carrier) is a member of the class Y (realised by attribute). Behavioural process characterizes the outer expression of inner working and reflects physiological and psychological behaviour such as laughing breathing, sneezing... These processes usually have one participant who is typically a conscious one, called the Behaver. Behavioural processes lie between material and mental process. Verbal process represents the act of saying and its synonyms. Three participants are involved: the Sayer – is responsible for verbal process; the Receiver is the person at whom verbal process is directed; and the Verbiage is the nominalised statement of the verbal process. These processes lie between Mental and Relational Processes.

Existential processes prove states of being, existing, happening. It typically employ the verb be or its synonyms such as exist arise occur. The only participant in this process is existent which follows the there is/are sequences.

Finally, using Halliday's transitivity as the analytical framework for this research affords user better analysis of how the personality of the character under study is portrayed in the text. Though Ibrahim's work and the present research apply Halliday's transitivity system to the analysis of some literary texts, they differ in focus. While Ibrahim (2011) concentrates on an investigation into Borton's assertion of Nawal el

Saadawi's *God Dies by the Nile* as a socialist feminist; the present research applies transitivity system in the construction and portrayal of a particular character in Alkali's *The Stillborn*.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data, analyses of Alkali's *The Stillborn*, discussion and findings. It focuses on the types of processes employed to construct the personality of the character of Grandma in the text. The actions, utterances, thoughts of Grandma and those of other characters she interacts with as well as the narrator's accounts formed the basis for the analyses. Thus, the analyses follow Halliday's (1985b) transitivity theory. For this purpose, extracts from the novel are used in this research. All the extracts are a combination of dialogue and narrative. A dialogue presupposes more than one person with alternating roles. The narrative usually specifies the setting in a given context and so influences how the dialogue is interpreted. The researcher employed the use of tables for the six extracts to validate using the transitivity processes in analyzing the personality construction of the character under study. The processes are identified and classified as material verbal, relational, mental, behavioural and existential processes as the case may be. The data are labeled Extract One to Extract Six though they are referred to as E1, E2, E3, E4, E5 and E6 respectively in the discussion.

4.1 Data Analysis

There are six extracts labeled E1 to E6 in this section for analysis. Each of the extracts is preceeded by an introductory background. The types of processes and participants identified in each extract are presented in a tabular form which is followed by the findings. A general discussion of the findings sums it up.

Before the analysis, it is imperative to note that transitivity analysis requires that complex sentences should be split into simple clauses involving a process and a participant in the process (Simpson, 1993:88). Hence, the researcher has split each complex structure into simple clause containing a participant and a process. For easy analysis, the clause representations are presented in tabular form immediately after each extract.

4.1.1 Extract One

The background of this text below is in Baba's (Grandma's step-son and the father of Li – the protagonist in the text) compound. It is the break of a new day and Li as well as her siblings go about performing various routine chores. Baba comes out of his hut with a folded chair and a "Teach Yourself How to Read" textbook. He stands and surveys his compound which is described as second best largest to the chief of the village. Grandma who is also out in the compound is about to go into her hut.

E1:

Baba unfolded his chair and the clicking sound attracted Grandma's attention. She was about to go into her hut but stopped in the door way and mumbled some incoherent greetings. Baba, who had opened his book, answered with a nod Li eyed them both and wondered at their relationship. It was obvious there was no love lost between them. They shared a hatred for each other though this was thinly disguised under a veneer of polite tolerance. Grandma was Baba's stepmother, his own mother having died when he was only six years old. Shrewd and dominating, she had driven three other wives from the household and had ruled father and son with iron hand.

It was rumoured that she had been divorced three times by Kaka, but each time had refused to leave. She had remained, immovable in the family and every mishap was blamed on her presence. Even Baba's fragile constitution had been blamed on her upbringing. Li liked her funny

stories but disliked her dirty habits and foul language. Somehow she was glad Grandma wasn't a blood relation (*The Stillborn*: 8).

Table 4.1 below shows the identification of participants and processes and their types that occur in the above passage.

Table 4.1: Classification of Participants, Process and their Types in Extract One

	Participant	Process	Type
1	Baba	Unfolded	Material
b.	The clicking sound	Attracted	Mental
c.	Grandma	Attention	Mental
2.	She (Grandma)	Was	Relational
b.	She (Grandma)	Stopped	Material
c.	Grandma	Mumbled	Verbal
3	Baba	Opened	Material
b.	Baba	Answered	Verbal
c.	Baba	Nods	Material
4	Li	Eyed	Mental
b.	Li	Wondered	Mental
5	They (Grandma and Baba)	Shared	Relational
6	It	Was	Relational
b.	This (hatred)	Was disguised	Mental
7	Grandma	Was	Relational
8	He (Baba)	Was	Relational
aa.	She (Grandma)	Is	Relational
b.	She (Grandma)	Is	Relational
9	She (Grandma)	Had driven	Material
b.	She (Grandma)	Had ruled	Material
10.	People	Rumoured	Verbal
b.	Kaka	Had divorced	Material
c.	She (Grandma)	Had remained	Relational
11	Every mishap (omniscient narrator)	Was blamed	Relational
12	Baba's fragile constitution	Had been blamed	Relational
14	Li	Liked	Mental
b.	Li	Disliked	Mental
14	Li	Was	Relational
b.	Grandma	Wasn't	Relational

From the above table, we find that five participants carried out for processes in varying frequencies. There are seven materials and mental processes each, three verbal processes and twelve relational processes. Out of the seven material processes, Grandma

has four processes. Baba has two while Kakas (Grandma's husband) has one material process. Grandma, Baba and the omniscience narrator have one verbal process each. Grandma has six relational processes, Baba and Li have one each, Grandma together with other family member has one relational process while the omniscient narrator has three relational processes. Grandma has two mental processes while Li has four and the omniscient narrator has one.

Although, from the above analyses, Grandma has more material processes than the other participants, she cannot be described as the actor in this extract. This is because, according to transitivity description, an actor is a participant, whose materials processes have effect on human participant (the goal). Some of her material processes in this extract are: "She ruled her husband and stepson with iron hand", "she drove three other wives from the household". The table also reveals that Grandma has the highest number of relational processes, which either establish her relationship with others or define her manner and qualities. Grandma having two mental processes and Li, her grand-daughter having four suggests that Li's perception is higher than that of Grandma: Li likes the funny stories that her Grandma tells but dislikes her dirty habits. Li equally perceives the poor relationship that exists between her father and Grandma. This is illustrated in the following quote: "Li eyed them the both (Baba and Grandma) and wondered at their relationship (The Stillborn: 8). According to her perception, they share a hatred which is thinly disguised under a veneer of polite tolerance.

4.1.2 Extract Two

The text below is an extract after an interrogative session between Baba and his children. The previous night, Li breaks a portion of the fence and sneaks out of the house

to meet her new found lover. When she returns in the early hours of the following morning, she runs into Sule (her elder brother) who also sneaks out of the house to drink and smoke with his friends. Sule notices the broken fence and reprimands Li for what she did and then promises to help fix the fence. Unfortunately, both Sule and Li overslept and could not mend the broken portion of the fence before Baba wakes up. Baba calls the children out to interrogate them. He wants to find out who among his children that broke a portion of the fence the previous night but could not as Li and Sule own up thereby confusing their father. Angrily, Baba discharges them. All along, Grandma was watching and enjoying the drama as it progresses from her own quarters in the compound.

E2:

Grandma was laughing wildly. She had been watching the scene from the security of her courtyard. ‘Foolish man’, she murmured toothlessly. ‘He is never tired of playing god with his children’. Her mouth twisted into a funny smile. Crack, crack, crack, crack! The shells of the groundnuts were gradually pilling high between her legs.

Kaka walked in slowly, muttering to himself. He stopped abruptly and surveyed the courtyard. The atmosphere was tensed. The air, polluted with hostility, assailed him. He watched his son disappear into his hut and observed Mama’s grim expression as she walked past him. Kaka knew then that there had been another explosion in his absence. He always knew when there was one – people behaved strangely. With a tottering step, he crossed over to his yard.

The twisted smile on Grandma’s face confirmed his worst suspicion. “The witch”, he thought. She is never happy until there is trouble in the family. Wicked, barren woman! In Kaka’s opinion, the woman had been the root of all his troubles and of his son’s too. But deep down in his heart, he knew Grandma wasn’t the only reason for his son’s abnormal behaviour (*The Stillborn: 24-25*)

Table 4.2 below shows the identification of participants, the processes and their types that appear in the above text.

Table 4.2: Classification of the participants, processes and their types in Extract Two

	Participant	Process	Type
1	Grandma	Was laughing	Behavioural
2	She [Grandma]	Had been watching	Mental
3	She [Grandma]	Murmured	Verbal
4	He [Baba]	Is	Relational
5	Her [Grandma's] mouth	Twisted	Material
6	The shells of the groundnuts	Were	Relational
7	Kaka	Walked	Material
8	He [Kaka]	Stopped	Material
9	The air	Is polluted	Relational
10.	He [Kaka]	Watched	Mental
b.	Kaka	Observed	Mental
c.	She [Grandma]	Walked	Material
11	Kaka	Knew	Mental
b.	He [Kaka]	Always knew	Mental
12	People	Behave	Behavioural
13	He [Kaka]	Crossed	Material
14	Grandma	Smiles	Behavioural
15	He [Kaka]	Thought	Mental
16	She [Grandma]	Is	Relational
17	The woman [Grandma]	Had	Relational
18.	He [Kaka]	Knew	Mental
29	Grandma	Wasn't	Relational

The above table shows that five participants carried out five processes in different instances with varying frequencies in this extracts. Material processes are five in number. There is only one verbal process. The table also shows that there are six relational processes seven mental processes and three behavioural processes. Out of the five

material processes, Grandma has two while Kaka has three. This suggests that Kaka is an active participant in this extract, he is the actor here. Grandma has two behavioural processes while people have one. Grandma has three relational processes while Baba has one. One behavioural process relates to the groundnut shell she was cracking while another one is used to describe the polluted air in the atmosphere after Baba had finished interrogating his children (The Stillborn: 24-25).

From the extract, it can be deduced that first, there exist a poor relationship between Grandma and Baba as well as between Grandma and her husband – Kaka. This is first noticed where Grandma from the portion of her quarters in the compound, watches the entire episode between Baba and his children without any intervention. Rather, she carries out one verbal process by calling Baba “foolish man, who is never tired of playing god with his children” (The Stillborn: 28). Kaka’s opinion of Grandma as “a witch”, wicked barren woman is a confirmation of the poor relationship between them. The description of the environment: “the air, polluted with hostility” paints a clearer picture of the kind of relationship they all have. The second deduction is that Grandma portrays herself as one who takes delight whenever there is conflict in the family. This she demonstrates by her grim expression as she walks past Kaka. By smiling while Baba’s children put him into confusion. When Sule and Li accept responsibility for the broken fence, Grandma laughs. This shows that she enjoys the game the children played on their father. Kaka’s six mental processes are a demonstration of his perception of Grandma as a trouble maker and an evil woman.

4.1.3 Extract Three

This extract is distinct from the others because of the predominance of direct quotations, that is, dialogues. The implication is there is direct discourse between the participants thereby reducing the voice of the omniscient narrator. Because of the presence of the characters' own words, the processes used for the participants by the writer are reduced. Hence, Halliday's notion of interpersonal function of language plays a significant role in the analysis of personality construction of characters. The interpersonal function describes the relationship between or among person (Halliday, 1997:36).

The extract below is connected to the previous one. When Kaka steps into the compound, and a tense atmosphere welcomes him, he suspects there is trouble in his household while he was away. His suspicion is confirmed when his son, Baba walks away into his (Baba's) hut without acknowledging Kaka's arrival. Grandma's countenance when he walks in further proves that all has not been well in his absence. Kaka having observed the polluted atmosphere of hostility, goes into a long-deep thought, then comes back to reality with a sigh.

E3

He sighed and drew up his rickety chair close to Grandma. 'What happened?' he asked in a conspiratorial whisper as he made to sit down. 'Where?' she asked contemptuously without looked up. He stared at her bent head for a second and flopped into the chair. 'In this compound, of course, where else do you think?' his tone was now one of the suppressed anger.

'Nothing happened,' she replied nonchalantly.'

'Don't nothing me, woman. You don't wear that face in this house for nothing,' he shouted at her.

'Which face?' she asked stubbornly.

'Your silly twisted face,' he answered angrily.

'My face,' she said, 'has always been silly in this house. As for being twisted, your abusive tongue is enough to twist a

virgin's face. Listen, friend, why do you bother to look for answers to your daily problems on my silly twisted face? You had better ask your precious son if you want to know what's happening in your family,' She continued to shell groundnuts as she spoke.

Kaka was silent for a long time. He cleared his throat and finally said, 'thank you for you advice, and now listen to mine, woman. Next time anything happens in my absence, you scrub that dirty face well before come in, or else I will scrub it for you,' He fell silent and she raised her head for the first time to see if he had finished with her'. He seemed to have.

'Ei ei ei,' she cackled. 'I shouldn't be surprised, friend. It sounds all too familiar. It must be in the blood,'

Kaka got up angrily knocking his chair over. Her mirthless laughter followed him to his hut.

(*The Stillborn*: 26-27).

Table 4.3 below shows the identification of participants, processes, and their types that occur in the text above.

Table 4.3: Classification of the Participants, Processes and their Types in Extract Three

	Participant	Process	Type
1	He [Kaka]	Sighed	Verbal
b.	Kaka	Drew	Material
2.	He [Kaka]	Asked	Verbal
b.	He [Kaka]	Made	Material
3.	She [Grandma]	Asked	Verbal
4.	He [Kaka]	Stared	Mental
5.	Kaka	Flopped	Material
6.	Kaka's tone	Was	Relational
7.	She [Grandma]	Replied	Verbal
8	You [Grandma]	Wear	Material
9	He [Kaka]	Shouted	Verbal
10	She [Grandma]	Asked	Verbal
11	He [Kaka]	Answered	Verbal
12	She [Grandma]	Said	Verbal
13	Your [Kaka] abusive tongue	Is	Relational
14	You [Kaka]	Bother	Behavioural
15	You [Kaka]	Had	Relational
16	She [Grandma]	Continued	Relational
b.	She [Grandma]	Spoke	Verbal
17	Kaka	Was	Relational
18	He [Kaka]	Said	Verbal

b.	Kaka	Said	Verbal
19	I [Kaka]	Cleared	Material
b.	I [Kaka]	Come	Material
c.	I [Kaka]	Will scrub	Material
20	He [Kaka]	Fell silent	Behavioural
b.	She [Grandma]	Raised	Material
c.	Grandma	To see	Mental
21	He [Kaka]	Seemed	Mental
22	She [Grandma]	Cackled	Verbal
23	I [Grandma]	Shouldn't be surprised	Mental
24	I [Grandma]	Sounds	Mental
25	Kaka	Got up	Material
26	Kaka	Knocking	Material
27	Grandma's mirthless laughter	Followed	Mental

The above table consists of two participants and five processes which reoccurred in different instances. There are eleven material processes, twelve verbal processes, five relational processes; six mental processes and two behavioural processes. Grandma has two material processes while Kaka has nine. Kaka has five material processes with Grandma as the goal and four goalless material processes. This suggests that kaka in this extract is an active participant and therefore the actor as described in transitivity theory. There are twelve verbal processes; both Grandma and Kaka have six each. This infers that the verbal exchange is evenly performed. It also reveals the strength of Grandma's tongue. We see it in her responses to Kaka's questions. When Kaka asks questions to enquire what happened in his compound while he was away; the manner in which Grandma respond to the questions shows that she has no respect for him as her husband, neither is she afraid of him as a man. She gives her answers either contemptuously or non-challantly. For instance, when Kaka asks what happened? She knows that kaka wants to know what happened in his absence. Instead of giving the appropriate response, she asks contemptuously; "When?" Again, when Kaka observes that she does not wear the kind of face Kaka came to meet unless something happens; she asks back: "Which face".

The exchange continues in this manner until Kaka becomes very angry. All the while, Grandma has her head bent down, and is busy cracking and shelling groundnut. She raises her head for the first time when Kaka becomes silent.

Her assumption is that he has finished talking to her. Grandma aggravates Kaka's anger when she infers that Kaka and Baba share some traits. The statement makes Kaka to get up angrily knocking his chair over as he leaves. This episode further confirms that there is no love lost between them. The author used transitivity metaphor to describe Grandma's reaction in the statement: "Grandma's mirthless laughter followed him to his hut". Laughter is an inanimate phenomenon that does not walk, hence cannot follow Kaka to his hut. We see here that behavioural process (laughing) is expressed in material process (followed).

4.1.4 Extract Four

This extract is taken from the part of the story where Li goes about her morning chores; Grandma comes to meet her with the intention of blackmailing her. A day before this encounter, Baba sends Li to the market to buy some eggs from the early morning traders. Li meets her lover (Habu) where she goes to buy the eggs. Habu slips a ten shilling note (money) between the folds of her wrapper. The money falls down. Li bends to retrieve the fallen note. As she gets up, she comes face to face with Grandma. Grandma gives her a knowing look and leaves.

E4:

With a smile on her face she turned to survey her work and once more came face to face with Grandma. Li's smile was quickly replaced by a sullen look. She thought that the old woman had a frightening way of stalking people and ought to have been a hunter. She bent down to continue her work.

‘Are you not going to greet me, co-mate?’ the old woman asked, using the teasing term affectionate grandmothers use for their granddaughters. Li became alert. Grandma was using that voice that says ‘I’m after something’.

‘Did you sleep well, Grandma?’ she greeted without interest. ‘I should have, co-mate, if my salt-pot hadn’t been empty’. She winked.

Li sensed what was coming next and armed herself with excuses.

‘I wish I were still young,’ Grandma continued with a mock seriousness.

‘Come to the point, you witch’, Li thought. Aloud she said, ‘what would you have done?’

Grandma was silent for a moment. Li knew she was treading on dangerous ground by prompting her to talk, but curiosity got the better of her.

‘I didn’t need to do a thing’, She replied. ‘I was good to look at. My breast were the size of backyard pumpkins and my buttocks the envy of the village maidens. The men could not resist me. You know I have been married fourteen times, and each time...’

‘You have said so, many times before, Grandmother,’ Li interrupted.

‘Yes I have, but the point is that I met each one of them in the market place’. She let out a shrill, mischievous laugh. Li straightened up and looked at her nervously.

‘What do you want, Grandma?’ she spat the words. ‘Oh nothing, co-mate. Just that my salt-pot is empty and your miserly grandfather will neither part with a penny nor eat a saltless soup.’

‘So why do you come to me? Why not my mother?’ she

Asked; knowing well why the old woman chose her. ‘Co-mate, I am certain your mother’s salt-pot is also empty. Not all of us are lucky enough to earn money in the market place these days. And from what I heard, the young man is rich in spite of his loin cloth.’ She laughed again, slapping her thighs.

Scowling, Li dropped her broom and rushed into their hut. Soon she emerged, her fingers tightly closed over something which she thrust into Grandma's outstretched hands before resuming her work.

The old woman opened her palm and counted the coins with glee. 'Next time co-mate, hide under the cover of darkness or else...' her voice trailed as she saw Awa's shopping calabash above the fence. She quickly turned to leave, but not before Awa caught the tail of her sentence. Awa looked curiously at her retreating figure. She disliked and mistrusted the woman and paid little attention to her intrigues, but as she walked past Li, she asked her (Li) what the old woman wanted.

'Nothing,' Li replied without looking up.
(*The Stillborn*: 35-36)

Table 4.4 shows the identification of participants, the processes and their types that occur in the above passage.

Table 4.4: Classification of the Participants, processes and their Types in Extract Four

	Participant	Process	Type
1	She [Li]	Turned	Material
2	Li	Smiles	Behavioural
3	She [Li]	Thought	Mental
4	The old woman [Grandma]	Had	Relational
5	She [Li]	Bent	Material
6	The old woman [Grandma]	Asked	Verbal
7	Li	Became	Relational
8	Grandma	Was using	Material
9	She [Li]	Greeted	Material
10	I [Grandma]	Should have	Relational
11	My salt-pot	Hadn't been	Relational
12	She [Grandma]	Winked	Material
13	Li	Sensed	Mental
b.	Li	Armed	Material
14	I [Grandma]	Wish	Mental
b.	I [Grandma]	Were	Relational
c.	Grandma	Continued	Relational
15	Li	Thought	Mental
16	She [Li]	Said	Verbal
17	You [Grandma]	Have done	Material
18	Grandma	Was	Relational
19	Li	Knew	Mental
b.	She [Li]	Was treading	Material

c.	Li	Prompting	Material
20	I [Grandma]	Didn't need	Relational
b.	Grandma	To do	Material
b.	She [Grandma]	Replied	Verbal
21	I [Grandma]	Was	Relational
22	My breast	Were	Relational
23	The men	Could not resist	Mental
24	You [Li]	Know	Mental
b.	I [Grandma]	Have been married	Material
25.	You [Grandma]	Said	Verbal
b.	Li	Interrupted	Verbal
26	I [Grandma]	Have	Relational
b.	The point	Is	Existential
c.	I [Grandma]	Met	Material
27	She [Grandma]	Let out	Verbal
28	Li	Straightens up	Material
b.	Li	Looked nervously	Mental
29	Grandma	Wants	Mental
b.	She [Li]	Spat (out the words)	Verbal
30	You [Grandma]	Come	Material
b.	She [Li]	Asked	Verbal
c.	She [Li]	Knowing	Mental
d.	Grandma	Chose	Behavioural
31	I [Grandma]	Am	Relational
32	I [Grandma]	Heard	Mental
b.	The young man	Is	Relational
33	Li	Scowls	Mental
b.	Li dropped	Dropped	Material
c.	Li	Rushed	Material
34	Li	Emerged	Material
b.	Li	Closed fingers	Material
c.	Li	Thrusts	Material
d.	Grandma	Stretches her hand	Maternal
35	She [Grandma]	Laughed	Behavioural
b.	Grandma	Slapping	Material
36	The old woman [Grandma]	Opened	Material
b.	The old woman [Grandma]	Counted	Material
37	The old woman [Grandma]	Cautioned	Verbal
38	Grandma's voice	Trailed	Behavioural
b.	She [Grandma]	Saw	Mental
39	She [Grandma]	quickly turned	Material
b.	Awa	Caught	Mental
40	Awa	Looked	Mental
41	She [Awa]	Disliked	Mental
b.	Awa	Mistrusted	Mental
c.	Awa	Paid little attention	Mental
d.	She [Awa]	Walked	Material
e.	She [Awa]	Asked	Verbal
42	Li	Replied	Verbal

This extract, like Extract Three, has many direct quotations, that is dialogues and as such, the voice of the narrator is reduced. There are six processes with varying frequency of occurrence and six participants in the extract. The table shows that material process occurred twenty-two times, verbal process occurred eleven times, relational process appeared thirteen times, mental process occurred twenty-three times, behavioural process appeared three times and one existential process. Out of the twenty-five material processes, Grandma and Li have twelve processes each, while Awa (Li's elder sister) has only one material process, Grandma and Li both have five verbal processes each while Awa has one. While Grandma has eleven relational processes, Li has one and the young man (Habu) has one. Grandma has seven mental processes, Li has ten, Awa has five while the one has one. Of the three behavioural processes, Grandma has two while Li has one. The only existential process in the extract belongs to the man (Habu).

From the table, we find that the material process has the highest frequency of occurrence. And out of the twenty-five material processes, Grandma and Li have a total number of twelve each. Li has one material process which has Grandma as the human goal. This implies that Li is an active participant in this extract; she is the actor. Grandma intends to intimidate Li and blackmail her in order to extort money from her which she (Grandma) succeeds in doing. The material processes in Grandma's speech suggest that she is in charge of the situation and has upper hand. This is rooted in her (Grandma's) knowledge that Li will never want her excessively strict father to know that she (Li) has a secret lover, not to talk of collecting money from him in public – a market place (*The Stillborn:35*).

Grandma has the highest frequency of relational processes. She has a total number of eleven relational processes. These processes expressed in the verbiages reveal the kind of relationship she has with people around her, the processes as seen in this extract describe her relationship with members of her family and her attributes as she makes references to herself. This is demonstrated in Li's perception of Grandma as "an old woman who has a frightening way of stalking people". To Li, Grandma ought to have been a hunter (*The Stillborn*: 35-36). Other instances of her relational processes where she reveals her qualities(physical attributes) are: "I was good to look at" still a young woman...", "my breasts were the size of backyard pumpkins", "my buttock the envy of the village maidens", "the men could not resist me" and so on. Li's eight mental processes against Grandma's three portray Li's perception of the person of Grandma. From the extract, we see that Grandma is not one to indulge in causal dialogue. Hence, when she "uses the teasing term-co-mate" that loving Grand-mothers use for their grandchildren, Li suspected trouble and gets herself ready for whatever Grandma plans to do. So Li "armed herself with excuses". Here, we see verbal process ("excuses") expressed through material process ("armed"). This is transitivity metaphor which the author employed as she constructs the personality of the character of Grandma.

Both Grandma and Li have five verbal processes respectively and Awa has only one. This implies that both Grandma and Li are active in their exchange of speeches. The dialogue pattern is smooth, thereby reducing the voice of the omniscient narrator. When Grandma approached Li, calling her "co-mate", Li suspected trouble but her curiosity makes her to prompt Grandma thus encouraging the verbal exchange. This leads to some of the conditional clauses that Grandma used. For instance, "Next time co-mate, hide

under the cover of darkness or else...” (*The Stillborn*: 36). Awa (Li’s elder sister) caught the end of Grandma’s sentence as Grandma quickly turns to leave before Awa gets closer. This makes Awa to look at her curiously. From the voice of the omniscient narrator, we understand that Awa “dislikes” and mistrusts” Grandma whom she believes, is “full of intrigues”. These mental processes as revealed by the voice of the omniscient narrator show that Awa, like the other members of the family, has a poor impression of Grandma. We can then say here too that the relationship between the two just like that of Grandma, Baba and Kaka is nothing close to the kind of relationship that exists among family members; especially in Africa. This could be the reason why Awa reacted the way she does when she sees Grandma and Li together has to ask Li what the old woman wants. And Li not wanting anyone to know what transpire between them (Li and Grandma) replied without looking up, “Nothing”. (*The Stillborn*: 36). We can deduce from the above that Grandma does not get close to people (including members of her family) without ulterior motive(s)

4.1.5 Extract Five

The extract below is taken from that part of the story where Li, Awa and Faku on a Friday, go to fetch firewood behind the Hill station (The quarters where the Europeans in the village reside). And as they draw closer to the cave with a sacred rock; a big boulder balanced expertly on three smaller ones which is believed to house the gods of the village and no one knows that truth except for a few elders of the village who will not say anything about what they know. The narrator takes us into Li’s thought.

E5:

She was not sure even wise grandmother knew.

[...]

Grandma, who had told the story, bragged to the children that someday she would enter the cave.

‘And get lost or slaughtered?’ Li had asked, bewildered. ‘Never’, was the throaty reply. I understand the language of the gods, I was once a priestess of the goddess of the hills’. Li smothered a giggle now at the mere thought of Grandma being a priestess of any god. She even doubted the authenticity of the story, considering that grandmother was fond of making up her own stories.

(The Stillborn: 37-38)

Table 4.5 below shows the identification of participants and the processes and their type that appear in the above extract.

Table 4.5: Classification of the participants, processes and their types in extract five

	Participant	Process	Type
1	Li	Was	Relational
b.	Grandma	Knew	Mental
c.	Grandma	Told	Verbal
2	Grandma	Bragged	Verbal
b.	She [Grandma]	Would enter	Material
R	Li	Had asked	Verbal
b.	Grandma	Reply	Verbal
4	I [Grandma]	Understand	Mental
5	I [Grandma]	Was	Relational
6	Li	Smothered	Mental
b.	Li	Thought	Mental
7	She [Li]	Doubted	Mental
b.	Li	Considering	Mental
8	Grandma	Was	Relational

We can see from the above table that there are two participants and four processes with varying frequencies in this extract. The processes consist of one material process, four verbal processes, three relational processes and six mental processes. Grandma has one material process while Li has none. Grandma has three verbal processes while Li has none. Grandma has two relational processes while Li has one. She has two mental processes while Li has four. We should note that the above extract is based on Li's thoughts (flashback).

Grandma wishes to enter the cave; 'enter' is a material process. We observe here that sometimes there are processes which relate to events that did not really happen, but rather what is wished to happen. Going by Halliday's submission, what is important in such types of constructions is the two concepts – mood and polarity. This we see in line three of the extract above: "...she would enter the cave", Grandma has three verbal processes while Li has one. Examples are seen in the following: Grandma tells the story; she brags about her bravery and answers Li's question. From the preponderance of Grandma's verbal processes as seen in this extract, we can infer that she is a proud old woman that is very good at telling stories(whether fictional or true stories). Li asks a question to demonstrate her disbelief. Li's question is an indication that some stories that Grandma tells are unbelievable. Li's four mental processes against Grandma's two is a further proof that she (Li) does not believe Grandma's story. She knows that Grandma fabricated the story. The thought of Grandma being a priestess who makes Li to smother a giggle demonstrates the fact that Grandma's kind of person can never be good enough to be a priestess to any god. Grandma has two relational processes while Li has one. She

(Grandma) attributes herself to a priestess of some gods. Though Li considers Grandma a wise woman, she (Li) feels that there is a limit to her grandmother's wisdom.

4.1.6 Extract Six

This extract is taken from the part of the story where Li goes outside the compound and overhears gossip which centres on her family. She considers the morning as a promising one and decides not to jeopardize it by listening to people she considers as luckless and notorious gossips. She slips behind her mother's hut.

E6:

Half an hour later, Grandma was deep in conversation with Mairama. Li could see the old woman gesticulating wildly. Gradually her still voice rose above Mairama's quiet one. Li could not hear the words at first so she stopped what she was doing and listened.

'Bastard son of a witch!' Grandma was saying. 'Cursed by your people and disowned by your father! She –man with the head of a man and the finish of a woman! If indeed you are a man show yourself in the dancing arena today clear yourself of the insult and stop sending your goat to eat my corn-flour. Can't you see, son of a witch, that real men do no such mean thing? I warn you,' she gestured to no one in particular, 'next time the goat dips its smelly nose in my flour, I'll castrate it, just like its master!'

Li winced and glanced towards the direction of her grandfather's hut. Manu was still in there, apparently listening to the tirade and unable to venture out. By now children had surrounded the old woman, their ears drinking in the torrent of abuse. Each time she said something really vulgar, they laughed and clapped
[...]

The men went about their business nervously, not daring to walk in the old woman's direction. They knew very well that in this ugly mood, she could extend her insults to the menfolk in general. Only the other day, she had sat on top of her barn and facing the ward had addressed the menfolk.

'Men of this village,' she had shouted. 'Listen to my words. I was married fourteen times in the eastern part of this land.

I left for this part because I could find no lion among them. The village was filled with red monkeys, black monkeys, jungle pigs, wild cats, toothless dogs and lame cocks. Did I know gods of my father, that I was coming to meet a worse pack? This village is full of lizards, snakes, worms and by the gods of my ancestors, cold slippery fish.' She bellowed with laughter.

'And their women? A pack of domestic donkeys with no shame. When they are not under the whip of their wizard husbands, they are busy plotting witchcraft.'

That day was bad, but today was worse. This time without mentioning names, she had made it clear to her listeners whom she was abusing. She took a broom and began to clear a space where she would soon spread the ear of her corn to dry. Manu, thinking she had gone into her hut, sneaked out of grandfather's hut and made for his hut. Too late he saw her. As he passed her, the old woman bellowed with laughter.

(*The Stillborn*: 52-53)

Table 4.6 below shows the identification of participants and the processes and their types that occurs in the above extract.

Table 4.6: Classification of the Participants, Processes and their Types in Extract Six

	Participant	Process	Type
1	Grandma	Was	Relational
2	Li	Could see	Mental
b.	The old woman [Grandma]	Gesticulating	Material
3	Li	Could not hear	Mental
b.	She [Li]	Stopped	Material
c.	She [Li]	Was	Relational
d.	Li	Listened	Mental
4	Grandma	Was saying	Verbal
5	I [Grandma]	Warn	Verbal
b.	She [Grandma]	Gestured	Material
5	I [Grandma]	Castrate	Material
6	Li	Winced	Material
b.	Li	Glanced	Material
7	Manu	Was	Relational
b.	Manu	Was listening	Mental
8	Children	Had surrounded	Material

b.	Their ears [children]	Drinking in	Mental
9	She [Grandma]	Said	Verbal
b.	They [children]	Laughed	Behavioural
c.	Children	Clapped	Material
10	The men	Went	Material
11	They [men]	Knew	Mental
b.	She [Grandma]	Could extend	Relational
12	She [Grandma]	Had sat	Material
b.	She [Grandma]	Had addressed	Verbal
13	She [Grandma]	Had shouted	Verbal
14	I [Grandma]	Was married	Material
15	I [Grandma]	Left	Material
b.	I [Grandma]	Could find	Material
16	The village	Was filled	Relational
17	I [Grandma]	Know	Mental
b.	I [Grandma]	Was coming	Material
18	This village	Is	Relational
19	She [Grandma]	Laughs	Behavioural
20	That day	Was	Relational
b.	Today	Is	Relational
21	She [Grandma]	Had made	Mental
b.	She [Grandma]	Was abusing	Verbal
22	She [Grandma]	Took	Material
b.	She [Grandma]	Began to clear	Material
c.	She [Grandma]	Would spread	Material
23	Manu	Thinking	Mental
b.	She [Grandma]	Had gone	Material
c.	Manu	Sneaked	Material
d.	Manu	Made	Material
24	Manu	Passed	Material
b.	The old woman [Grandma]	Laughs	Behavioural

From the table, we can see that there are nine participants who carried out five processes with varying frequencies. There twenty-one material processes, nine mental processes, six verbal processes, eight relational processes and three behavioural processes. Grandma participates in twenty-five processes. Li shares the remaining twenty-two processes with other people as well as the village. Grandma is involved in eleven material processes out of the twenty-one as shown on the table. This makes

Grandma an active participant in this extract as most of the actions (both actual and intended) are carried out by her. She has two material goals... “She took a broom”, “she began to clear a space”; two intentional material goals: “where she would”, “spread, the ear of her corn; ‘I will castrate it’ and then nine goalless material processes. Li has three goalless material processes. “She ‘stops’, ‘winces’ and ‘glances’ towards the direction of her grandfather’s hut” where the unfortunate victim (Manu) of Grandma is trapped. Just like the previous extracts, because of the predominant direct speech, the voice of the omniscient narrator is greatly reduced. Though she has more material processes, she is not an actor in this extract. The reason is that her actions are not visibly on any human participant. Most of the material processes that Grandma carries out are through her verbal processes. Through her speech, we are able to know her marriage history and also we discover that she is not careful of the fact that it is a patriarchal society where women are to be submissive, quite and passive. She has five verbal processes. No other participant has verbal process in this extract. This implies that though she is but a woman, the men fear her. Nobody responds to her nor attempts to calm her down for fear of her extending the abuse to such a person. This shows that what she cannot achieve by her actions, her foul language does for her. She has two relational processes while others have one each. She has four mental processes, Li has three, Manu has one, the children have one and the men have one.

Despite the fact that Grandma did not mention the name of her victim (Manu), she makes (mental process) it clear whom she was referring to. Her perception of the men in the two villages is that the men are tricky cowards that cannot provide security for their women. She perceives the women as unnecessarily humble and very passive. Women

who rely on their husbands for everything (*The Stillborn*: 53). Her two behavioural processes which are demonstrated as she laughs while insulting the men and when Manu-her victim was sneaking out of Grandfather's hut, show how callous she is. The processes portray her as abusive with foul language and as an old woman that has no respect for anybody in the village. These are all her strategies to liberate herself from men's domination and oppression.

4.2 Discussion

Based on the six extracts selected for the analyses in this chapter, Halliday's six transitivity processes are used in the clause representations analysed. They are: material, mental, verbal, relational, behavioural and existential processes. This research therefore, answered the question: "What process types are used in the novel to construct personalities of characters? Characters are vehicles that literary writers employ to convey their messages to the reader. They are given different personalities for easy identification of roles. The author of the novel under study has employed different processes through the utterances of the characters, their actions as well as the omniscient narrator's accounts to construct the personality of Grandma in the novel. In order to attain the objectives of this research work, the actions, utterances and the thoughts of other characters that Grandma interacts with in all the extracts analysed will be considered.

A total number of fourteen participants carried out six categories of processes with varying frequencies. Hence, the total number of processes that occur in the six extracts is two hundred and twenty- four. These processes form the basis of the analyses. The material processes are seventy in number with a descriptive percentage of 31.25%. The verbal processes are thirty-six in number with a descriptive percentage of 16.07%.

There are forty-seven relational processes with a descriptive percentage of 20.98%. The mental processes are fifty-five in number with a descriptive percentage of 26.34% while the behavioural processes are eleven in number with a descriptive percentage of 04.91% and the existential process is only one with a descriptive percentage of 0.45%. (The descriptive percentages are rounded up to the nearest two decimal points) The table below shows the above figures.

Table 4.7: Identification of types of process, frequency and their ordinary descriptive percentage

Types of process	Frequency	Ordinary descriptive (%)
Material	70	31.25
Verbal	36	16.07
Relational	47	20.98
Mental	59	26.34
Behavioural	11	04.91
Existential	01	0.45
Total – 06	224	100

From the table above, it can be deduced that material process has the highest number of occurrence and is, therefore, the most predominant processes used in the selected extracts. It is the process of “happening” or “doing” verb groups which carries the main activity in a clause. It usually involves doing or carrying out physical and tangible actions. Halliday calls them “the action clauses” expressing the fact that something or someone undertakes some action or some entity “does” something – which may be done to some other entity. These processes can be probed by asking “What did X do?” For instance, in E1, Grandma married sixteen times. In this structure, ‘married’ is a material process. The material process must have an obligatory actor and an optional

goal. The material process determines the participant actor in a given process. The predominancy of the material process implies that Grandma is an active character even though she is not a strong one. According to transitivity description, a strong character is a participant whose action is directed towards a human goal (the receiver of the action).

The focus of this research work is centred on the construction and portrayal of the personality of Grandma using all the processes. Therefore, it is imperative to accord her particular attention. Grandma carried out five out of the six categories of processes propounded by Halliday. These processes occur in varying frequencies resulting to one hundred and three out of the entire number of two hundred and thirteen processes analysed with an ordinary descriptive percentage of 48.36%. The remaining one hundred and seven processes which have an ordinary descriptive percentage of 51.64% is shared among the other participants (characters). She has thirty-one material processes with an ordinary descriptive percentage of 31.10%. Out of thirty-six verbal processes, she has twenty-two with an ordinary descriptive percentage of 21.36%. She has twenty-five relational processes with an ordinary descriptive percentage of 24.27%. Her mental processes are eighteen with an ordinary descriptive percentage of 17.48%, while she has only seven behavioural processes with an ordinary descriptive percentage of 6.80%. This is an indication that Grandma is an active and character considering her socio- cultural setting. That is, instead of being passive, voiceless and remote-controlled by men in the kind of society that she finds herself, the processes assigned to her portray her as active, vocal and wise old woman who knows how to handle whatever situation she finds herself to her advantage. The table below shows all the types of processes that were gotten from

the extracts analysed, their frequencies percentages and those that Grandma has as well as their frequencies and percentages in ordinary descriptive percent.

Table 4.8: Identification of the types of processes, their frequencies and ordinary descriptive percentage as well as those belonging to Grandma

Types of process	Freq. of general occurrence	%	Freq. of Grandma's involvement	%
Material	70	31.25	31	29.52
Verbal	36	16.07	22	20.95
Relational	47	20.98	25	23.81
Mental	59	26.34	20	19.05
Behavioural	11	04.91	07	6.67
Existential	01	0.45	-	-
Total	224	100	105	100

From the table above, we find that Grandma is involved in five processes out of the six processes identified by Halliday. The processes that she is involved in as shown on the table are: Material process, relational process, verbal process, mental process and behavioural process. The table shows that Grandma's material processes predominates her other processes. The material process which is a process that indicates who does what to who/whom, determines the strong and active participant in a process. If the material process is directed towards a human goal, then the participant who carried out the process is said to be a strong actor (participant). Out of sixty-three material processes, Grandma has thirty-one while the other characters (participants) that she interacts with as revealed by the six extracts analysed, share a total number of thirty-two. Two of these processes are directed at her husband, stepson and her co-wives in extract E2. Going by Halliday's transitivity description, this implies that she is a strong and an active participant- the actor in that extract; even though she is not the central or main character in the novel. We see

the different ways in which she carries out the material processes in all the extracts. For instance, in EI, she was about to go into her hut but “stopped” in the doorway. This action was performed when she sees Baba. Other instances of her material processes are “she had ‘driven’ three other wives from the household”, “she had ‘ruled’”, father and son with iron hand. These are all goal oriented material processes. In a patriarchal society such as the one Grandma finds herself, women are expected to be completely passive, submissive, fearful and highly respectful (Koroye, 1989). Women are expected to operate under the dictates of their husbands, brothers or fathers (Chukwuma, 1989, Chukwukere, 1994, Cook, 1977). But from the actions of Grandma as featured in her material processes as well as the narrator’s report, we see a strong, fearless and active Grandma who succeeds in driving away her co-mates (co-wives) and is determined to live a life that is free of operation to the fullest in her matrimonial home. As a corollary, she is described as shrewd and dominating. It is interesting to know that Grandma does not allow her age or her natural challenges to compel her to succumb to the oppression of women in her society.

In E3, Grandma carried out a material process: “She raised her head”, which portrays her as disrespectful and rude. After the drama between Baba and his children, Kaka comes home. He observes the tense atmosphere and knew that there was trouble in his house while he was away. He thinks for a while and decides to enquire from his wife (Grandma) in order to know what happened in his absence. He moves closer to Grandma who is busy cracking and shelling groundnut with her head bent down. As the question and answer episode progresses, Grandma maintains her position of not narrating the incident between Baba and the children until Kaka becomes silent for a while, she

assumes that he has finished what he has to say and she raises her head for the first time. All this while that Kaka was talking to her, her head was bent down (the position that she was as she shells groundnut before Kaka walks into the compound). Within the socio-cultural context such as Grandma's such behaviour is considered as rude and disrespectful (Ewuru, 2011)

Grandma's material processes are mainly passive and referential in E4 (*The Stillborn*: 35-36). They present her as a woman who takes advantage of every situation to get what she wants. She sees Li collecting money from her lover in a market place. The following morning, she (Grandma) chooses to blackmail Li in order to extort the money from her. This is because she knows that Baba, being a very strict religious man, will definitely punish Li for such act if he knows. Li who does not want her father to know about it cooperates with Grandma. For instance: "I have been married fourteen times", "...I met each of them in the market place". This implies that Grandma was an attractive and a beautiful woman in her youthful days. If not, she would not have married and remarried fourteen times in a society where women are marginalised. Grandma continues with her antics as Li out of curiosity prompts her until Li has to give her the money. Grandma "opened her palm", collects the money and "counts the coins with glee". 'She quickly turned to leave before any other family member sees her. We can also describe her here as a very smart old woman'.

Grandma has a number of conditional clauses containing material processes which relates to events that did not really happen. They are what she wishes to happen or intend to do. According to Halliday, what is imperative is mood and polarity. In his explanation, mood basically consists of the subject and a finite verb, while polarity is

concerned with whether something or an action occurred or did not occur (Halliday, 1994:88-92).

Going by this explanation, we observe that there are material processes that Grandma is involved in that did not actually occur. For instance in E6, she made utterances such as:

“I’ll castrate it”.

“She would soon spread the ear of her corn to dry”.

(*The Stillborn*: 52-53).

We can deduce from the above, that she is boastful. Though she did not carry out the actual action, but the fact that she said it makes her a heartless and vengeful old woman. The above scene is taken from the part of the story where a goat belonging to a neighbour (Manu) strays off to eat her ear of corn. Rather than chasing the goat away, Grandma chooses to accuse Manu of sending the goat. According to her; “No sane man will send an animal to do such a thing”. Therefore, the above material processes demonstrate how vengeful and heartless she could be. By extension, it also shows her hatred for men. The above discussion has answered the first research question: “What are the types of processes employed to construct the character of Grandma and which of the processes is predominantly used to depict her personality?”

From the six extracts analysed, we find that Grandma has a total of twenty-two relational processes. Relational process as earlier mentioned construed the relationships of being and having between two participants. It serves to describe or give attribute to the participant(s) involved in the process. Grandma’s relational processes depict her relationship with other characters. The process equally reveals her physical qualities (attributes) as a young person. For instance in E1:

“Grandma was Baba’s stepmother...”

“She (Grandma) had remained immovable in the family...”

“Grandma wasn’t a blood relation”

The quotations above reveal the relationship that exists between Grandma and the other members of the household. This revelation is from the voice of the narrator. Li in E2 amplifies Grandma’s poor relationship with other people by thanking God that Grandma is not a blood relation. This reveals to us that Li is not fond of her step grandma as other grandchildren are. Grandma is described as one who is never happy until there is trouble in the family (*The Stillborn*: 53). According to this process, happy here is a relational attribute used to describe one of Grandma’s qualities. Other instances are:

In E3: “I (Grandma) shouldn’t be surprised...”

“My face has always been silly...”

In E4: “I was good to look at...”

“My breasts were the size of backyard pumpkins...”

“Yes I have...”

In E5: “I was once a priestess of the goddess of the hill...”

(*The Stillborn*: 37-38)

It is interesting to note that the quotations above are all qualities of Grandma as expressed by her. They are attributes that Grandma uses to portray herself as a beautiful woman. It is a way of defending herself against her relative misjudgment and their inappropriate attitude towards her. Moreover, by stating her quality of being “good to look at” and that “she was once a priestess of the goddess of the hill” she may believe that it is more important to be herself than to mind the words of other, especially her husband – Kaka.

Our earlier analysis shows that verbal process generally reoccurred thirty-six times out of which, Grandma has twenty-two out. The verbal process represents the art of saying and its synonyms. Usually three participants are involved in this process: the sayer

is responsible for the verbal process; the receiver is the person to whom the verbal process is directed, and the verbiage is the normalized statement of the verbal process. She adequately utilized this process at the expense of other characters in the text. In E1, Grandma uses the verbal process for greetings as expected culturally as quoted below:

“She was about to go into her hut but stopped in the door way and “Mumbled some incoherent greetings”.
(*The Stillborn*: 8)

However, the narrator describes the greetings as “incoherent” and “mumbled”. This implies that she greeted because she had to and not out of respect as culture demands. In other places she uses the verbal processes to insult men. For example, in E2, when Baba was trying to determine who broke the fence, she murmured toothlessly:

“Foolish man”
“He is never tired of playing god with his children.”

This suggests that she hates Baba’s definition of discipline. This implies that Baba is excessively strict with his children. Hence, rather than love them he lords over them and the entire household.

Grandma’s verbal processes also demonstrate her use of vulgar or foul language. It is a trait that distinct her from any other woman/character in the text. An instance is seen in E5 as quoted below:

“Bastard son of a witch!
Cursed by people and disowned by your father!
She-man with the head of a man and the finish of a woman!
Cant you see, son of a witch”

The quotation above is from the scene where Manu’s goat strays and eats her ear of the corn that she spreads out to dry. Though she does not mention the name of her victim, everyone in the community knows that it was Manu she is insulting. This portrays her as an abusive woman who is never tired of insulting anybody that crosses her path. In

Grandma's society, women have no right to talk back at men not to talk of abusing or insulting them. This is demonstrated by Mama (Baba's wife). Another instance is when she sits on the top of her barn and facing the ward. She addresses the men.

'Men of this village,' she had shouted.
Listen to my words. I was married fourteen times in the eastern part of this land. I left for this part because I could find no lion among them. The village was filled with red monkeys, black monkeys, jungle pigs, wild cats, toothless dogs and lame cocks. Did I know, gods of my father, that I was coming to meet a worse pack? This village is full of lizards, snakes, worms and by the gods of my ancestors, cold slippery fish.' She bellowed with laughter. 'And their women? A pack of domestic donkeys with no shame. When they are not under the whip of their wizard husbands, they are busy plotting witchcraft.'
(*The Stillborn*: 52-53)

From the above quotation, we can see that Grandma is one old woman who is not bound by dictates of tradition or the society. Considering the socio-cultural context she finds herself. She is to be voiceless, passive, suppressed and completely submissive (Ewuru, 2011: vii). Though Grandma is calculative in her speech, we see a vocal, courageous and self-assertive and fearless old woman. She does not appreciate the lordship of any man over her (*The Stillborn*: 26-27). From the above verbal processes, we discover that it is the quest for an ideal man-husband that makes she change husbands from one community to the other. Her implied disappointment is, instead of meeting "real" or better men when she left the eastern part, she met with worse ones. She describes them as wives beaters and likens them to reptiles.

The woman, she describes them as "pack of domestic donkeys with no shame." Going by the ethnography of the Hausa (Hymes, 1971:12), by this is meant that they are very cunning and clever; working tirelessly to please their husbands. Yet at the slightest

provocation, they are beaten by their husbands. And when they are not being beaten, they are busy plotting ill fate for their husbands.

Like every other character, Grandma also uses verbal process to response to questions asked by her family members. Sometimes the manner in which she responds to the questions reveals that the relationship she has with them is not as it ought to be. For example, in E2, the scene where Baba had just finished interrogating his children and Kaka walks into the compound. He perceives the tense atmosphere with polluted air of hostility and tries to enquire from Grandma as seen below:

Kaka – “What happened?”

Grandma – “Where?” she asked contemptuously without looking up.

Kaka – “In this compound, of course, where else do you thing?”

Grandma – “Nothing happened; she replied non-challantly” [...]

This house [...] friend, “Why do you bother to look for answers to your daily problems on my silly twisted face?”

(The Stillborn: 26).

Her use of verbal processes here indicates that she is not obliged to answer Kaka’s question. It could also be interpreted to mean ‘I am not your security officer that should report to you whatever happens in your absence’. It could also mean that both Grandma and Kaka are barely tolerating each other as husband and wife. This is because all her responses as seen above could be interpreted to mean rudeness within the context of her culture.

In addition to the above, Grandma uses the verbal processes to warn and to advise. We see this in the following quotes from E3.

“You had better ask your precious son if you want to know what’s happening in your family; *(The Stillborn: 26-27).*

This response comes when Kaka, out of suppressed anger because of the manner that she was responding to his questions describes her face as silly and twisted. Another

example is seen in E4 during her episode with Li, after the day she saw Li collecting money from her (Li's) love in the market place as revealed in the quote below:

“Next time co-mate, hide under the cover of darkness or else...”

She gives this piece of advice when she had succeeded in extorting the money from Li. This portrays her as a blackmailer and dishonest old woman. The events before the advice show that it was not a sincere one but one advice given to mock Li.

In E6, we see Grandma warning her victim as presented below in the quotes:

“I (Grandma) warn you; she gestured to no one in particular, next time. The goat dips it smelly nose in my flour, I'll castrate it, just like its master” (pp.53-54).

In the above context, she uses verbal process to warn and to threaten her victim. Though she did not mention the name of her victim, her listeners know whom she was referring to. Her earlier threat:

“If indeed you are man, show yourself in the dancing arena today and clear yourself of the insult... she- man with the head of a man and the finish of a woman!”

Everyone in the community knows that Manu has a fertility problem which resulted to his wife leaving him. Thus, Grandma need not mention his name before those listening would identify him as her victim. This, again, reveals another trait of Grandma as a cruel and heartless old woman. It also extends to point out the fact that Grandma does not spare any opportunity to highlight any weakness exhibited by men. Her speeches and insults imply that men do not have all that it takes to dominate or to be in charge of all sphere of the society. The author has demonstrated here that verbal process is one feature that is very important in constructing the personality of a character in literary

works. It is interesting to note that Grandma's role as a strong and active character in some of the extracts analysed is a corollary of her material processes in her speeches.

Another process that featured in the personality construction of Grandma is the mental process. Mental process usually encodes mental reactions such as perception thoughts and feeling, and cognition. It gives an insight into people's consciousness and how they sense the experience of the reality (Halliday and Mattiessen, 2004). Out of forty-seven occurrence of mental processes that are analysed, Grandma has a total of twenty-two. The author creatively employs the mental processes that Grandma is performed in the text to build certain qualities in Grandma. For instance in E1, when Baba comes out with a chair to sit and read, we see that as he "Unfolds the chair, the clicking sound attracted Grandma's attention which made her to stop in the doorway. This suggests that Grandma has good cognition which enables her to pay attention to minute details of events around her; even as minute as a clicking sound from the action of unfolding a chair.

In E2, we observe that Grandma carried out one mental process. This was when Baba was interrogating his children, and the children were playing pranks which agitated Baba. Grandma, rather than going over to the scene to either rescue Baba or apply her wisdom to elicit the truth from her grandchildren, she remains in her quarters in the compound watching the episode as it unfolds with delight. This prove the earlier comment passed by the narrator. That is, Grandma and Baba both share hatred that is only disguised under a veneer of polite tolerance. Her mental process here portrays her as one who derives pleasure in seeing her step-son and his children in conflict. Perhaps this is also the reason why she calls Baba "foolish man, who is never tired of playing god

with his children.” Grandma perceives Baba’s method of instilling discipline on members of his family, especially the young ones as unnecessarily rigid and unproductive. Her mental processes reveal her impression of |Baba. She sees Baba as authoritative, someone who is always using his position as a father to coerce his children. Yet, his authority, according to Grandma does not work. She concludes that Baba is a loser who is always displaying his arrogance at the slightest opportunity (*The Stillborn*: 24-25).

Grandma does not spare Kaka – her husband. She perceives Kaka as a weakling who is not happy with the happenings in his household yet could not do anything. This is rooted in the fact that Kaka knows that many things that Baba (his son) does, go against his own (Kaka’s) sense of judgment, yet he did not reprimand Baba. Grandma hates the mere thought that Kaka feels that Baba is grown up and so will not listen to an old man. On one occasion, Grandma likes Kaka’s behaviour to that of Baba. This comparison upset Kaka severely. In fact, it aggravated Kaka’s anger.

The last process that Grandma is involved in that contributed to the construction of her personality is the behavioural process. There are a total number of ten behavioural processes out of which Grandma has six and the remains fore is shared between Kaka, Li, and Baba. Behavioural process stands between material and mental processes. The verb here is intransitive one which indicates an activity in which both physical and mental aspects are inseparable and indispensable to it. In this process, there is only one participant, also known as behavior (the agent who behaves) who is typically a conscious one. It characterizes the outer expression of inner workings and reflects physiological and psychological behaviours such as laughing, sneezing, smiling, and so on.

Grandma portrays her personality in almost all the extracts analysed through behavioural processes. This she exhibits either by smiling, laughing or grining. In E2; “Grandma was laughing wildly”, “Grandma’s grim expression”, “the twisted smile on Grandma’s face...” These are quotations from the part of the story where Baba was trying to extract the truth from his children before he punishes the culprit. Grandma’s behavioural processes here are as a result of the difficulty Baba encounters in his attempt to discover who broke the fence and sneaked out of the house the previous night. Other instances are when she smiles, and laughs the day Manu’s goat ate her ear of corn (p.53).

Grandma’s participation in her behavioural, mental, verbal, mental, relational and material processes illustrate, that Grandma tries to sketch her relationship, behaviour and her inner thoughts towards other members of her family or towards life and society. The author artistically bended the five processes above together and mould the character of Grandma as distinct from any other character, especially, the female characters.

From the discussion so far, we observe that material processes ranked highest among the processes that Grandma is involved in. thus, we can say that material process is predominantly used in the personality construction of the character of Grandma. Therefore, this has answered the second part of the research question: “What are the types of processes employed to construct the character of Grandma, and which of the processes is predominantly used to Grandma, and which of the processes is predominantly used to depict her personality?”

In addition to the processes that are assigned to Grandma by the author to define her personality, we also have to discuss the processes of other characters that we earlier analysed. These are characters that Grandma interacts with; they are: Baba, Kaka, Li,

Awa and Manu. Baba is Grandma's son whose interaction with Grandma is seen in E1 only. He has two material processes, one verbal and one relational process respectively. These processes reveal the poor relationship between Grandma and him. In E1, when he comes out to read, we see that Grandma, who is about to go into her hut stops in the doorway and mumbles some incoherent greeting. Because of the poor relationship between them, Baba answered with a nod. By this action, Li notices the hatred Baba and Grandma shared; even though, this hatred, according to Li is disguised under a veneer of polite tolerance.

Unlike Baba, Kaka (Grandma's husband) has thirteen material processes; four verbal and relational processes each, eight mental process and two behavioural processes from the earlier analyses of these processes, he finds that Kaka has a very poor relationship with Grandma too. In E1 (The Stillborn: 8) Kaka divorced Grandma thrice and each time she refused to leave. Kaka perceives Grandma as a stubborn old woman. He calls her "The witch, who is never happy until there is trouble in the family. He sees grandma as a barren wicked woman. In his opinion, Grandma is the root of all his troubles and those of his son's (Baba) too. Even though, deep down in his heart, he knows that Grandma was not the only reason for his son's abnormal behaviour (pp.24-25). In E3, the effect of this poor relationship is seen as Kaka seizes every available opportunity to rain insults/abuse on Grandma. The quotations below buttress this claim:

"Your silly twisted face"; he (Kaka) answered angrily.
"My face"; she (Grandma) said has always been silly in this house. As for being twisted, your abusive tongue is enough to twist a virgin's face.
[...]
"Next time, anything happens in my absence, scrub that dirty face well before I come in or else, I will scrub it for you!"

The above quotations of the verbal exchange between Kaka and Grandma is an indication that something is wrong with their relationship as husband and wife. It suggests that they share a very poor relationship; a relationship that is characterized by insults, disrespect, and intimidation, false accusations among other things.

Li's interaction with Grandma results to a total to forty-three processes. She has nine material processes. She has nine material processes, six verbal processes, thirteen relational processes, fourteen mental processes and one behaviour process. From her mental processes, Li perceives Grandma as a dirty old woman who has frightening way of stalking people. Li thinks that grandma ought to have been a hunter. Grandma, according to Li, tells funny stories. Like other members of the family, Li's relationship with Grandma is similar that between Grandma, Baba and Kaka. This is demonstrated in E4 where Grandma accosts Li so as to extort money from her through blackmail. Though Grandma's intention is not explicitly stated; we see how meaning is represented in the clause as Simpson (2004:74) asserts that a principal mode of narrative characterization is the transmission of 'action and event'. This mode, he explains, refers to the way character is developed through and by the semantic processes and participants roles embodied in narrative discourse.

For instance in E4:

“Are you not going to greet me, co-mate? The old woman (Grandma) asked, using the teasing term affectionate grandmother's use for their granddaughters. Li because alert. Grandmother was using the voice that says ‘I'm after something’.”

[...]

The old woman opened her palm and counted the coins with glee. “Next time co-mate, hide under the cover darkness or else...”

(The Stillborn: 35-36)

The quotation above contains clause representations such as “The old woman asked”, ‘Li becomes alert’, “Grandma was using”, “The old woman opened her palm”, etc. Illustrates the fact that transitivity specifies the different types of processes that are recognized in the language and the structures by which they are expressed (Halliday, 1985:101). Li, having aligned Grandma’s processes, concludes that her Grandma is a wise old woman, who is as crafty as a hunter.

Furthermore another character whose interaction with Grandma gives an insight to the personality of Grandma is Awa. Although her interaction with Grandma is brief, it reveals her perception of Grandma. Awa is Li’s elder sister. She has five mental processes as seen in E4 below:

“Awa caught the tail to her (Grandma’s) sentence. Awa looked curiously at her retreating figure. She dislikes and mistrusted the woman and paid little attention to her intrigues”
“She (Awa) asked (Li) what the old woman wanted”.

The quotation above is taken from the part of the story where Grandma blackmails Li in order to collect the ten shilling that her lover gave her at the market place. Awa, just like any other member of the family is suspicious of Grandma. From Awa’s reaction when she see Grandma leaving, shows that Grandma does not get too close to any member of the family nor involves in chit chat for no reason. Awa dislikes and mistrusts Grandma which is the reason why she pays little attention to her (Grandma’s) schemes. By implication, Awa’s perceives Grandma as a dubious old woman who is not to be trusted.

Lastly, another character that does not interact face-to-face with Grandma but suffers from her abuse is Manu. Manu is Grandma’s neighbour who lives close to the

family compound and visits Kaka often. He (Manu) suffers from infertility which is known to the entire community. One day, his goat strays to where Grandma keeps her corn flour. The goat ate some portion of it. Grandma is offended by the goat's action and corollary of this, is series of abuses on Manu. Her behaviour towards Manu is an indication that Grandma has no respect for anybody. In a patriarchal society such as the one Grandma finds herself, she is expected to be passive, respective under the oppression and dictates of the men in her community. The author demonstrates this by the choice of linguistic elements that feature in the verbal and intended material processes that are assigned to Grandma. We observe that Manu does not have any open interaction with Grandma. However, the effect of her insults (verbal processes) is so strong that Manu cannot come out from Kaka's hut (where he has being before grandma starts raining the abuses). The shame and embarrassment he feels trapped him in Kaka's hut. All the neighbours; including younger women and children all listened without any intervention. From the omniscient narrator's voice, we observe that even the men of the village did nothing for fear of Grandma extending the abuses to them. This means that everybody in the village fears Grandma's insults, even the men who are supposedly "in charge of the society." That day is described as worse compared to a similar incident that happened previously. Manu, thinking that Grandma has gone to her hut, sneaks out of Kaka's hut and heads for his own only to be further embarrassed as Grandma bellowed with laughter when she sighted him. Grandma's behavioural process her (laughing) portrays her as an old wicked woman who enjoys inflicting pain on people; especially on the men.

According to Azuike (2003) and Chikwenye (1985), the African culture is noticeably biased in favour of men. This culture relegates women to inferior position in

the society. This is one of the preoccupations of the text. The language of women is, as a result devaluated for the simple reason that the African culture permits the derogatory treatment of women who are said to be emotional due to their emotional outburst. Contrary to the above, we observe from our earlier discussion which is based on the transitivity processes analysed that Grandma is not one old woman to be oppressed or treated as subordinate. Emotional outburst is not a quality to be attributed to the character of Grandma. This is because, from her verbal and material processes, we find that Grandma is 'strong – willed' stubborn and often described by members of her family as 'shrewd' and dominating". This aspect of Grandma's personality is revealed through the nature of language that the author creatively chose for the character. The linguistic items that are carved for the character of Grandma, and how she craftily uses them as she interacts with other characters, is what distinguishes her from other characters in the text. This featured in most of the extracts analysed. For instance in E2:

"Foolish man" she [Grandma] murmured toothlessly, 'He is never tired of playing god with his children". She made this statement when Baba was interrogating his children in an attempt to determine the person that broke the fence the previous night. The statement reflects Grandma's disapproval of Baba's mode of discipline. In an egocentric society such as Grandma's, women have no right to question or judge man for whatever reason. But here, we see that Grandma is one old woman whose tongue is always let loose at the slightest opportunity."

Another example is found in E3 as quoted below:

"My face; she said has always been silly in this house. As for being twisted, your abusive tongue is enough to twist a virgin's face. Listen, friend, why do you bother to look for answers to your daily problems on my silly twisted face? You had better ask your precious son if you want to know what's happening in your family."
(*The Stillborn*: 26-27).

The quotation above is taken from that part of the strong where Kaka comes home and observes that there was trouble in his household and attempts to make enquiry from his wife – Grandma. Her nonchalant attitude while responding to Kaka’s questions suggests that she is not afraid of Kaka nor does she feel she is answerable to him. She responds to Kaka’s insults in such an annoying manner that gets Kaka very angry eventually. This portrays her as a courageous woman unlike Mama (Baba’s wife) who is described as passive and voiceless. Grandma in all her dealings with Kaka and Baba, his son tries to set herself free from their traditional and societal restrictions. This is reflected in her language and the way she uses her words. Her vocabulary items give rise to the types of processes that she has in the text (material, verbal, relation, mental and behaviour processes). These processes are carefully and artistically employed by the author to mould a unique personality for Grandma. This has indeed confirmed the claim by Leech and Short (1981) cited in Ibrahim (2011), that linguistic choices are meaningful and stylistic. Therefore, the research question, “How does the linguistic choice in transitivity play an important role in building up characters” is answered.

We should look into the frequency of the role of Grandma as a participant in the processes assigned to her. From our analyses earlier, we find that Grandma and other fourteen participants occurred two hundred and thirteen times. Out of these, two refer to Grandma’s goal directed roles (human participant goals), four refer to her non- human participant goal while one participant refers to the cooperation of Grandma with other family member. Going by Halliday’s transitivity theory, this suggests that Grandma is a strong and active character but not the protagonist in the story.

In terms of process types, there are equally two hundred and twenty-four processes which consist of material process, verbal process, relational process, mental process, behavioural process and existential process. The material process is predominant with a total frequency of sixty-three constituting about 30.69%. This is followed by mental process which occurred fifty-five times constituting a percentage of 24.75%. The relational processes constitute 21.78% with a frequency of forty-seven. The verbal processes appeared thirty-five times which constitute 16.82%. The behavioural processes are eleven in number with a percentage of 05.29% while there is only one existential process with a percentage of 0.96%. Out of the six processes identified, Grandma carried out five processes. These are material process, verbal process, relational process, mental process, and behavioural process. She has no existential processes. She has a total of ninety-seven processes as well. The material processes are predominantly in her speeches.

Out of the total sixty-three occurrences of the material process, Grandma has a total number of thirty-two while the remaining thirty-four occurrences is shared among the other characters that she interacted with as revealed in our analyses. This suggests that Grandma has the highest number of material processes even though she is not the central character in the story. The material processes of transitivity are processes of doing, usually physical and tangible actions. Halliday calls them action clauses expressing the fact that something or someone undertakes some action or some entity “does” something – which may be done to some other entity. For instance, in E1 Grandma “stopped” in the doorway, she “drove three other wives from Kaka’s household”. She is also said to have “ruled son and father with iron hand.” (*The Stillborn*:

8). All the above instances and many other actions that she expresses in her verbiages, contributed to making her a strong or an active participant.

In addition to the preponderance material processes, which the author effectively employ to depict the character of Grandma are: verbal, relational, mental and behavioural processes. The verbal processes represent the verbs of saying and its synonyms. It usually lies between mental and relational processes. The author deliberately chose linguist items that characterize Grandma's language as rude, rebellious and disrespectful. Grandma is not a passive old woman as her society desires (Ewuru, 2011 and Cook, 1977). Thus, in order to make her voice heard, we see her responding non-chalantly to Kaka's questions. For example: "which house?" Grandma replied non-chalantly in E2 (*The Stillborn*: 24). In other points, she warns, threatens or advises sarcastically. Sadly enough though she lives with her family, there is no interaction between them except when she is after something. The relational processes construed relationship between participants. It also defines and gives attributes to participants. This is another process that the writer used to define the kind of relationship that exists between Grandma and the other characters, especially members of her family. From her relational processes, we observe that she has a very poor relationship with her family members. Her relational processes also reveal her beauty when she was young. This accounts for why it was easy for her to marry and re-marry up to sixteen times (*The Stillborn*: 35-36).

The mental process encodes mental reactions such as perception, thoughts and feelings. The mental processes give insight into people's consciousness and how they sense the experience of the reality. This, we observe that Grandma has a total of fifteen. She perceives Baba as a father who likes playing god with his children (*The Stillborn*: 24-

25). The last process that featured in the personality construction of Grandma is the behavioural process. Behavioural process is a transitivity process that characterizes the outer expression of the inner working and reflects physiological and psychological behaviours such as breathing, sighing, laughing, smiling, sneezing... (Halliday, 2004). In E3, E4 and E6, we observe that when Grandma makes people uncomfortable when she nags or abuse them, she ends up either laughing or smiling. The prevalence of mental and verbal processes proves that Grandma does not just keep her concerns inside of her heart and does nothing. In other examples of her relational processes, Grandma portrays herself as being very attractive – a young woman that young men desire; men she usually meet at the market place; she at one time was a priestess to some goddess. That is the way she defends herself against her relatives' misjudgment of her inappropriate attitudes towards. What is more, by stating her quality of being attractive and a priestess" she may believe that it is more important to be herself than to mind the words of others. The proportion of relational, mental and behavioral processes illustrates that Grandma, though not the main character as proven earlier in this discussion, is a strong and active character who tries to sketch her relationship, behaviour and her inner thoughts towards other members of her family or towards life and society. This study has, therefore, answered the last research question: "How effective are the processes in identifying the roles of characters in a given text?" has been answered. To sum up this chapter, six extracts and a total number of fifteen participants and six processes with two hundred and thirteen occurrences have been examined. Six transitivity processes are identified. The material process occurred sixty-three (63) times predominating with an ordinary percentage of 30.69%, the mental processes occurred fifty-five (55) times constituting an ordinary percentage of 24.75%,

the relational processes occurred forty-seven (47) times with an ordinary percentage of 21.78%, verbal process occurred thirty-five (35) times constituting an ordinary percentage of 15.84%, the behavioural processes occurred eleven (11) times with an ordinary percentage of 6.93% and the existential process is only one (1) with an ordinary percentage of 0.48%. The material processes are the processes that determine whether a character is major or minor, active or weak. From our analyses, the material processes have the highest frequency of sixty-three. We have seen here, how linguistic choices blend together in transitivity processes and are effectively employed to construct the personality of Grandma.

4.3 Summary of Findings

Based on the analysed data in this chapter, the following findings were arrived at, that:

- i. language in a patriarchal society can be manipulated to entrench patriarchal power;
- ii. six classification of transitivity processes were employed in the text. However, only five of the processes were used to construct and portray the personality of the character of Grandma;
- iii. certain linguistic choices in transitivity play important role in building up a character in a literary text. The author's use of local expressions in her language enhanced and embellished it. She particularly adopts the traditional speech patterns of her socio-cultural background and transliterates them into English in unique ways.

- iv. the strength of her style in constructing and portraying her character lies in her descriptive ability and also in the simplicity of her choice of diction.
- v. it is not the frequency of the material processes of Grandma that affirmed her active and strong position. Instead, it is the material processes in her verbal processes.
- vi. transitivity processes are effective in identifying the roles of characters in a given text.
- vii. men's speech in a patriarchal society is forceful and authoritative.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study has applied transitivity processes in the analysis of the construction and the portrayal of the personality of the character of Grandma in Alkali's *The Stillborn*. Transitivity as discussed earlier is described as a system that is concerned with the "goings-on" – things going on out there in the world around us. It is a system that consists of doing, happening, feeling and state of being. These "goings-on" are sorted out in semantic system of language, and expressed through the grammar of the clause. The transitivity theory is an offshoot of systematic functional grammar propounded by M.A.K. Halliday. He proposed the theory to demonstrate the meta-functional nature of language. The theory proposes that language is a social semantic system, thus, what is said depends on what one needs to accomplish. In this systematic grammar, transitivity is one of the most important systems. For it construes the world of experience into a manageable set of process types. It is a system that generally refers to how meaning is represented in the clause; it is concerned with who does what in relation to whom, where, when, how and why. It goes further to specify the different types of processes that are recognized in a language and the structure by which they are expressed. There are six classifications of these processes and there is no priority of one process over another. Halliday's theory of transitivity is used as the theoretical framework of this study.

The study is basically a content analysis of the utterances, thoughts, actions of Grandma and other characters that she interacts with as well as the narrator's accounts in Alkali's *The Stillborn*. *The Stillborn* is a literary text that tells the story of the

marginalization of the African woman in a sexist society which relegates womanhood to gender roles. It portrays the general disempowerment of women. However, it portrays women in a positive light as the text upholds female potentialities which the patriarchal structure has represented. The data for this work were collected from two sources: primary source-*The Stillborn* and secondary source- related corpora, the internet and the use of ethnography.

In this research work, through purposive sampling, six extracts were selected from the novel. The selected extracts comprise utterances, thoughts and actions of Grandma and five other characters as well as the narrator's accounts. These formed the basis for the analyses. From the extracts, a total number of two hundred and seven processes are analysed. The findings show that the six transitivity processes of Halliday (1985a) are used in the text. However, only five out of the six are used to construct and portray the personality of Grandma. These five processes are: material process, verbal process, relational process, mental process and behavioural process. The material processes are more with a total number of sixty-three out of which Grandma has thirty-one, mental processes are fifty-one out of which Grandma has sixteen, relational processes are forty-seven with Grandma having twenty-five, verbal processes are thirty-two in number out of which Grandma has twenty-two and ten behavioural processes out of which Grandma has six. The material processes are predominant with a total number of sixty-three. Material processes determine whether a character is active or weak in literary works. Grandma has a total of thirty-one material processes while the other characters as well as the narrator share the remaining thirty-two; thereby making

Grandma an active character. The material processes also revealed that she is not the central character in the text.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings in this study reveal that the author of *The Stillborn* used five transitivity processes to construct the personality of the character of Grandma. It was discovered that the material processes predominates the other processes. Grandma having the highest number of the material processes shows that she is a strong and active character in the text, even though she is not the central character in the novel as revealed by the analyses. The study also shows that the factors responsible for her active participation are, her will-power, self assertion and the determination to liberate herself from men's oppressions that make her not to succumb to the their (men) dictates. The five processes blend to portray Grandma as shrewd, dominating, abusive and dirty. These factors put together help her to live an active life in a society where she is expected to be voiceless, passive, and completely submissive to her husband and by extension, to all male. All these are discussed within the framework of the novel in which her actions, thoughts and utterances and those of the other characters as well as the omniscient narrator's accounts are revealed in the socio-cultural context in which the text is written. Though Grandma is old and illiterate, she never allowed these challenge to hinder her from fighting for freedom so as to be liberated from men's oppression. Furthermore, the study has been able to establish the effectiveness of transitivity system in identifying the role of a character in a text.

The study has also shown how linguistic choices in transitivity play vital role in the construction and portrayal of a character in a literary text. The author has

demonstrates this through the type of vocabulary items (the character's use of language and the skills of language manipulation) she selected for the character in order to portray the character's personality. A creative Writer constructs characters bearing in mind his/her preoccupation. This is because it is everything about the characters in a literary text that conveys the author's message to the reader.

The researcher is of the opinion that transitivity analysis gives more detailed and nuanced support to the interpretation of personality of characters. It provides linguistic evidence that aids comprehension of the personality of characters for better understanding of the entire text. This is because it is the characters that are employed as vehicles to convey the author's message. Therefore, a good interpretation of characters in a given literary text is a step towards better understanding of the story. To this end, an understanding of the working of these processes in a text takes a reader beyond ordinary reading and understanding.

In conclusion, the researcher hopes that linguistically, this study will contribute towards an understanding of how linguistic analysis of a text can be used to define the personality of a character in a text. Socially, this study aims to call people's attention to the fact that strong will power and self assertion and determination are 'formidable weapons' to be used to combat with challenges of life; irrespective of their limitations. Grandma, though old and uneducated, refused to succumb to the dictates of her patriarchal society because she possesses these 'weapons'.

5.3 Areas for Further Study

Based on this study, the researcher has identified the following areas for further study:

- 1) The role of metaphor in a text is very important. Any meaningful research into transitivity metaphor will certainly be of vital use to researchers, language teachers, learners, writers, readers and also linguists.
- 2) A research can also be carried out to determine the effectiveness of transitivity in sports commentary and students' writings.
- 3) Since this work concentrated on the analysis of a text using transitivity model, further research can focus on Labov's narrative model.

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