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**ANTISEXISM IN SEFI ATTA'S
*EVERYTHING GOOD WILL COME***

Présenté par :
Fawaz ADANVOESSI

Sous la direction de :
Pr. Léonard A. KOUSSOUHON
Maître de Conférences de Linguistique
Anglaise et d'Etudes Africaines Anglophones

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Dedication

This essay is specially dedicated to:

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- **AKADIRI Moulikatou**, my loving, caring, supportive and understanding mother.
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Introduction

Discrimination issues have always raised interest, debate and controversy all over the world owing to the impact of unfair treatment on their victims and on society as a whole. Discriminatory attitudes have gained currency and have become potential sources of anger and frustration. Besides, gender-based discrimination stands as one of the most known forms of discrimination and women are its common victim.

In fact, women are discriminated against in many societies and activities and achievements associated with them are either disregarded or trivialized. They are thought to be the weaker sex and as such need the support of men. On the contrary, men are the yardstick, the point of reference and nothing a woman does is good enough to question this hierarchy. Examples in everyday life abound to attest to this hierarchy which is not based on intrinsic values but largely determined by the sex variable.

Any language reflects the social, cultural and economic system, that is, the world's view and organization of its native speakers and speech community both diachronically and synchronically. (Koussouhon, 2009). English Language speakers have become sensitive to the biased and discriminatory use of their medium of communication. As a result, political correctness or behavior, attitude or language chosen so that they do not offend anyone, has become a hot issue in the public sphere.

Sexist English language or the use of the English language that expresses prejudice and discrimination against members of a sex, especially females, has been keenly debated. The concern to change language that belittles women or trivializes activities associated with females

has been a key concern for feminist theorists, activists and even people outside the university context.

Literature, Kehinde and Mbipom (2011) argue, as a creative activity projects those deeply ingrained and relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, feeling and behavior of the society from which it is drawn and it captures the diverse forms of interactions between various parts of a society and its people. Literature thus transcends mere entertainment to expose the significant moral and social views of the writer. Demeterio (2001) suggests that literature is a social institution: it is created by the writer who is a member of a society. Its medium is language, which is a social creation. It represents life which is a social reality. This view emphasizes the intrinsic link between literature and society.

African literature is a male-created and male-chauvinistic art. (Ojo-Ade, 1998). Another fact that African literature is phallic; as it were, dominated by male writers, critics, publishers and almost exclusively deals with male characters and male issues thereby turning a blind eye to women issues.

Female writers in the last decades explore new dimensions that could help women's cause. The Nigerian feminist novels, for example, have moved from the themes of women in village or traditional settings with docile female characters to novels that have vibrant and assertive female characters. (Akung, 2012). The women in the novels are no longer the occupiers of the solitary spaces in the kitchen; they rise and fight for their rights.

From the preceding pronouncement, it stands to reason to scrutinize female writers' fiction in the light of theories, claims and findings about English language and sex. For me to carry out this investigation, I have termed my dissertation Antisexism in Sefi Atta's *Everything*

Good Will Come. The interest of such a study lies in the fact that a few decades after the heyday of political correctness in the English language, I deem it necessary to find out whether inclusive language occurs in African literary artefacts. By the same token, surveying female idiolects drawing on sociolinguistic theories can reveal a lot as to gender issues.

The methodology used in the research paper is analytic and interpretative. It is concerned with the analysis of a few extracts from the novel by resorting to claims, findings, assumptions and theories about sexism in the English language.

This thesis is sectioned into three main parts. Chapter one is concerned with the literature review and the theoretical base of the research work. Chapter two addresses the analysis of a few excerpts from the novel in the light of the theories discussed in the theoretical framework. Chapter three is the discussion of the findings and the sociolinguistic justification of the author's idiolects.

Chapter One: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

1.1: Literature review

The concept of sexism according to Wikipedia Online Dictionary is coined in the mid of 20th century and refers to the belief that one gender is inferior to, less competent or less valuable than the other. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2003) has a similar position and views sexism as the belief that one sex is weaker or less important than the other. Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary (2012) defines sexism as prejudice or discrimination against women or behavior, conditions, or attitudes that foster stereotypes of social orders based on sex. Oxford Online Dictionary (2012) refers to sexism as prejudices, stereotypes or discriminations typically against women on the basis of sex. From what has been said so far, antisexism appears to be attitudes and practices which oppose all views and theories that belittle females.

Taking into account these definitions of sexism and applying them to the field of English language, one can assert that sexist language is the discriminatory use of the language with the view of creating the supremacy of the male gender over the human species. Nilsen (1977) corroborates this point of view as she contends that sexist language is one that expresses unfair assumptions about gender differences. Tsehelska (2006:21) writes: “sexist language is a term that labels the use of male dominating phrases suggesting that members of one sex are less able, intelligent and skilful”. In the 1970s and 1980s, feminists have decided to call attention to the way in which the use of certain language items seem to systematically discriminate against and cause offence to women. (Mills, 2008). While there are many definitions of sexism, the one which is often cited is “the practice whereby someone foregrounds gender when it is not the most salient feature.” (Vetterling-Braggin, 1981).

If we take for granted that there are no categorical differences which depend upon the gender of the speaker or the addressee in the English language, we are likely to wonder how this language is sexist. Wolfson Nessa (1989) argues that sexism is not truly systemic but is rather a reflection of the social attitudes of speakers, both male and female. Lakoff (1973) asserts in her article “Language and Society” that language gives expression to cultural assumptions and for this reason it both reflects and reinforces the social order. In the same vein, Nilsen (1971) contends that language and society are as intertwined as a chicken and an egg; the language a culture uses is a telltale evidence of the values and beliefs of that culture.

Mills (2008:18) similarly sides with scholars who contend that sexist language is used to maintain a social order. In fact, she maintains that language is neither simply a reflection of nor vehicle for social values, nor solely a catalyst for social change, but because of its role in the construction of identity and roles for both individuals and groups within society, it should be seen as a resource which informs the way that people think about their positions in society. Mills’ opinion on sexism brings about the fact that sexism, just like other discriminatory forms of language, stems from larger societal forces.

The above-mentioned opinions about sexism give the evidence that the discriminatory use of any language has to be traced back to society. In fact, instances of sexism encountered in the English language can be ascribed to the wrong conception held about women and leads society to view and treat them as the weaker sex. Bosmajian (1974) sustains this position as he argues that language serves to reflect and perpetuates society’s beliefs. What is more, Mills (2008) addressing cases of sexist use of the English Language, explains that the language as it is used in the present and the resources available in it reveals the struggle both political and moral over whose voices should be represented and mediated. This might be why about two decades earlier,

Schultz (1990) commented that the analysis of language tells us a great deal about interest, achievement, obsession, hopes, fears and prejudices of the people who created the language.

Dimitrios Thanasoulas (1999) has his say in the relationship between language and sex. In the article “Why can’t a woman be more like a man”, he identifies factors that can make women’s speech different from men’s in Western societies. To account for the differences between women’s and men’s speeches, Thanasoulas postulates that language should be treated as a social and value-loaded practice which reflects an intricate network of social, political, cultural and age relationship within a society because linguistic behavior is not to be kept separate from society and its value. Sarah Mills (2008) critically looks at sexism resorting to conversational and textual data collected over the past ten years. She suggests that there are two forms of sexism: overt sexism which is clear and unambiguous while indirect sexism can only be understood contextually in relation to the interpretation of surrounding utterances.

Still on the issue of sexism in the English language, a few feminists, among whom Toolan (1996), Mills (1995 b, 2008), contend that it is no longer enough to accuse texts of being coercive and describing ways they manipulate the readers. As Toolan (1996:4) puts it, it is necessary to “include a clear sense of how a particular control revealing, hegemony eliciting, manipulative texts might have been constructed, so as to more nearly attain the status of being a non-manipulative and non-hegemonic text”. This pronouncement by Toolan reveals that subtle, insidious, exclusionary and discriminatory discourses abound in the English Language.

A few scholars have concerned themselves with gender issues in male and female African fiction. Kehinde & Mbipon (2011), in “Discovery, assertion, and self-realization in recent Nigerian migrant feminist fiction: the example of Sefi Atta’s *Everything Good Will Come*”, offer

a reading of Sefi Atta's novel as a quintessential African feminist novel. In the light of textual analysis and using post-colonial and feminist theories as the framework, they highlight the enduring need for female discovery, assertion and self-realization for survival in neo-colonial Nigeria. The two scholars opine that Sefi Atta's novel addresses issues relating to the condition of women and transcends this to interrogate post colonial existence in Nigeria which is characterised by abnormality. They then conclude that the enduring strength of Atta as a novelist lies in her ability to highlight the appropriation of social, gender and economic caste as a means of subjugation in contemporary Nigeria.

Abiola (2011) aims at verifying the reason for women oppression and female subordination in his Bachelor Essay "Gender issues in Akachi Adimora Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* and Zaynab Alkali's *The Virtuous Woman*". This study sheds a light on the fact that the two mentioned authors are so vociferous in condemning the dichotomy in the two worlds of men and women and the society that created them. Abiola goes further by stating that the world has changed from the traditional to the modern ways as a result of civilization; which is why the treatment of women should be changed.

"Feminist dimension in Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*" by Akung (2012) brings about the fact that female characters in the novel are very assertive and utilize all means available to them to affirm their individuality. By and large, this paper examines the socioeconomic and political landscape of Nigeria and how it affects the psychology of the woman. Akung suggests that women cannot continue in the space defined for them by society; they must fight for their space both in the home and in the larger society.

Uko's (2008) "The concept of modern womanhood in Promise Okeke's Trilogy" explains that:

Writings by African women actually transcend the shift from the peripheral to the central positions for women. They are largely concerned with the assertion of self, reaffirmation of female pride, authentication of African womanhood as well as the search for an independent identity. (Uko, 2008:67)

This opinion comes as a counter discourse to the negative image of women in predominantly male- authored texts.

In his Maîtrise thesis, Sexism in Flora Nwapa's *One is Enough*, Mignanwande (2008) abides by sociolinguistic theories and findings to discuss how sexist Flora Nwapa's *One is Enough* is. One of the two striking facts of this research work is that non-inclusive terms abound in the novel. This study also discloses that most of the female characters are very assertive; which is quite uncommon in most of the novels published in the early 1980s. Koussouhon (2009) deals with Anglophone East and West Africa discourses with a view to finding out how they are politically correct in their use of the English Language. He has arrived at the conclusion that most African male novelists use sexist English. He discusses female assertiveness and examples of inclusive or non-sexist language in Flora Nwapa's *One is Enough* (1981) and Ama Ata Aidoo's *The girl who can & other stories* (1997) and finds out that the two major writers (Aido and Nwapa) make use of inclusive language and their female characters are highly assertive.

1.2: Theoretical framework

1.2.1: Sexism in the English Language

1.2.1.1: Direct sexism

In this section, I am going to concern myself with one of the forms that sexism takes. In actual fact, direct or overt sexism is the discriminatory use of the language; a biased use of the language which heavily draws on lexical items. I will address direct or overt sexism under these categories: generic pronouns and nouns, semantic derogation and transitivity.

1.2.1.1.1: Generic pronouns and nouns

The investigation into sexism in the English Language is partly due to the fact that females are either excluded from mention or given a disparaging treatment not accorded to men. The most significant manifestation of sexism is the use of the masculine pronoun *he* and its variants as in this sentence: Every good citizen should love *his* country more than *himself*; *he* should be ready to die for it if the need arises. Pronouns and nouns are important elements to consider when analyzing sexism. As Hellinger and Bussmann (2001; 2-3) argue, personal pronouns and nouns have emerged as a central issue in debates about language and gender. They are needed to communicate about the self and others. They are used to identify people as individuals or as members of various groups and they may transmit positive or negative attitudes. About the generic use of *he/man* or *he/man* issue, Smith (1985) notices that of all the referential asymmetries pertaining to female-male domain, the practice of using nouns and pronouns that are marked for masculinity (man, mankind, he, him, his) when referring to human beings in a general sense and to individuals of indefinite sex has attracted more controversy. Therefore, the use of singular pronouns (he, him) or the generic use of *man* while referring to human beings

irrespective of their sex demonstrates how the English Language works to make the male gender seem to be the representative of human species and its speech to be the standard. As Mills (2008: 47) views:

sentences using the generic pronoun have the additional effect of affecting the markedness of female reference (i.e. male is the norm and female the marked form) and contribute to the general invisibility of females within the language and within the society as a whole.

Early studies have analyzed whether the use of generic pronouns and nouns is interpreted as such by those who hear or read it. Mackey and Fulkerson (1979), carrying out an experiment, have asked students whether or not they think that sex-related nouns (aunt) or pronouns (her) or the generic (he) could be understood to refer to females. The study reveals that the students never find problems understanding whether a female or male is referred to where sex-linked nouns or pronouns were given. But 87 % of the students have got problems of understanding when sentences contain the generic *he*. This is an evidence that the pronoun *he* is nearly interpreted as referring to a male even when the context of the sentences would lead people to recognize that a female is being referred to.

To investigate interpretations of the generic term, Marytna (1980) has given subject sentences with generic pronouns *he/they* and *he* or *she*. Each sentence is followed by a picture of either male or a female and the subjects are asked to judge whether the picture is appropriately matched to the sentence. If the pronoun *he* is really interpreted as generic, thus pictures will be appropriately related to the sentences containing the pronoun *he*. If, on the contrary, the pronoun *he* is ambiguous or sex-exclusive in the minds of hearers or readers, sentences containing the pronoun *he* will be judged inappropriate. Martyna's study shows that 20% of the respondents

feel that a female picture does not match a sentence containing a generic *he* (Martyna 1980: 75). Here again, the experiment shows that the generic pronoun *he* excludes females in the minds of people.

Moulton et al. (1978) similarly state, from the result of an experiment involving two hundred and twenty-six male and two hundred and sixty-four female college students, that:

Even when a context is clearly specified as gender neutral (describing a student in a co-educational constitutional) male terms used “neutrally” induce people to think of males to the extent that coming more readily to minds confers an advantage; females are disadvantaged when they are part of population referred to by a parasite called “neutral” term. (1978:1035)

Wolfson (1989) has illustrated the awkwardness of using the generic *he* with the following examples. The ridiculous quotation on the irritative use of generic pronouns comes from General Assembly of Connecticut: “At least twenty-four hours before any abortion is performed in the state, the person who is to have such abortion shall receive counseling... concerning *his* decision to have such abortion. The awkwardness in the above-mentioned example lies in the fact that the determinant *his* which is grammatically used in reference to masculine nouns has served to refer to a noun which, in the case under study, is feminine. Thus, it can be inferred that the generic use of masculine determinant creates confusion. Be that as it may, there is a strong evidence that the use of generic nouns and pronouns leads to endless confusion, ambiguity and a strong sense of exclusion. As Spender (1985) puts it:

Through the introduction of he/man, males were able to take another step in ensuring that in the thought and reality of our society, it is the males who become the foreground while females become the blurred and often indecipherable background... It reinforces the belief of the dominant

group that the males are the universal, the central, important category so that even those who are not members of the dominant group learn to accept this reality.(1985: 157)

1.2.1.1.2 : Semantic derogation

An area which has to do with sexism is what is known as semantic derogation. In actual fact, terms which are associated with women or femininity have historically become pejorative. Talking about semantic derogation, Schultz (1990) argues that there is a systematic process whereby words and phrases associated with women became negatively inflected. For example, the fact that the word *female* is attached before a word describing a profession (e.g.: female judge, female doctor) is perceived as belittling to women or harmful to young girls. Thus, young girls will find it difficult to identify with such careers themselves since they are given the impression that these professions are reserved for males. Robin Lakoff (1973) rightly argues that the need to identify female professions by overtly indicating that they are female professions demonstrates that apart from the socially defined women professions such as elementary school teaching and nursing, males occupy most of the professional positions in English-speaking societies.

Nilsen (1977) noted that most nouns in the English Language are considered to be basically male so that an extra word or affix is needed when the referent has been specified female. This sexist attitude is reflected in *prince/princess, mayor/mayorette, lawyer/woman lawyer, truck driver/ lady truck driver*. It is certainly not difficult to see how the attachment of the feminine suffixes “-ess” and “-ette” to the word *prince* and *major* respectively to form feminine words indicates that females are only an appendage to males. The suggestion that

women are an appendage to males is related to the male bias in word combination in which separate words refer to the females and males. Likewise, a few feminists have argued that these terms which refer to women seem to be diminutive. Hellinger (2001:109) argues that these terms which refer to women using an affix were in fact problematic. As she puts it: “They never only denote the female counterpart of a male referent, but generally carry additional negative connotations.”

One of the ugliest problems of the semantic inequality in the English Language is the existence of many more negative words for females than there are for males. Wolfson (1987) noted that it has been one of the major evidences to demonstrate the low esteem in which females are held in English-speaking societies. For example, the word *queen* has negative connotation and is moreover bound up with sex in a disapproving way compared with its counterpart *king* which is only used to mean the crowned head of the nation or a particularly fine male leader. The words *dame*, *madame*, *mistress* take on negative sexual meaning while *sir*, *master* and *mister* have none. In the English Language, when a woman has sexual intercourse for the first time, she is not described as giving away her virginity; rather, it is taken away from her: she is *deflowered*. (Nilsen 1977:137). These words suggest that in engaging in sex, the woman is dispossessed of some aspects of her sexuality. But even when higher control over her sexuality is demonstrated by a woman, she is a prostitute; which doesn't bring about her elevation. Hundreds of demeaning synonyms (e.g. whore, tart, slattern and harlot) therefore exist for the word *prostitute*. (Schultz 1975). In order to suggest that prostitution is a female activity, when a man is engaged in it, he is referred to as a *male prostitute*.

Metaphorical use of animals to refer to human subjects carries sexist overtones when it is addressed to females. Both females and males may be addressed as *pigs*, *dogs*, *chickens*, *snakes*

and *turkeys*. It is however important to note that to call a woman a *dog* or a *pig* implies that they are sexually unattractive. No such connotations to males. To call a man a *tiger* implies that he is sexually aggressive; a valued masculine attribute. Only two animals, *goat* and *wolf*, carry negative sexual connotations for men and in both cases, they imply excessive and usually aggressive sexual drive; an attribute that is not regarded negative by most English speakers. The only non-sex related animal metaphor exclusively related to women is *cat*, which connotes a spiteful, gossiping woman. There is no male equivalent (Nilsen 1977). With the semantic inequality, Spender (1980) states that the semantic rule which has been responsible for the manifestation of sexism can be simply stated:

There are two fundamental categories, male and minus male. To be linked with males is to be linked to a range of meanings which are positive and good; to be linked with minus-male is to be linked with the absence of these qualities. That is to be decidedly negative and usually debased. (Spender 1985: 23)

Schultz (1990) suggested three origins for the negative connotation taken on by words associated with women. The three origins of pejoration are contaminating concept, euphemism and prejudice. Contamination, she argued, is due to the fact that men think about women sexually, and therefore any term used to refer to women will acquire sexual connotation. Euphemism, as she explained, plays a role since despite a great variety of terms for prostitutes and sexually active women, there is a tendency to avoid naming prostitutes explicitly, which leads either to using words referring to other women, or to dysphemisms. Finally, Schultz argued that prejudice is the primary motivator for pejoration and is occasioned by the need for men to constitute women as an “out group” by focusing largely on their sexuality.

1.2.1.1.3: Transitivity

Transitivity in Halliday's terms is part of the ideational function of the clause. The ideational function of the clause is concerned with the transmission of ideas. Its function is that of "representing processes or experiences: actions, events, processes of consciousness and relations." (Halliday, 1985: 53). The term "process" is used in an extended sense to "cover all phenomena... and anything that can be expressed by a verb: event, whether physical or not, state or relation." (Halliday 1976: 159). Halliday notes that "processes" expressed through language are the product of our conception of the world. As such, transitivity model provides means of discovering how certain linguistic features of a text encode the particular worldview or ideological stance of a reader or speaker. Transitivity system can suggest different mind-sets or worldviews, including a traditional or an unusual mind-set reflected in language.

In analyzing transitivity in literary texts, Burton (1982) argues that there is a tendency for female characters to be represented as acted upon by other characters instead of being represented as active and acting upon others. In the same way, Wareing (1984) has argued that, even in women's literature where the female characters seem to be fairly active and self-determining, there are still tendencies for the characters to be represented as passive and acted upon at certain crucial moments of the text; for example in sexual scenes. Certain women sometimes tend to say: "You will never guess what happened to me." rather than "You will never guess what I have done."

Ehrlich (1999, 2001) also analysed transitivity choices. In a disciplinary hearing at a Canadian University where allegations of sexual harassment and sexual assault were made by two female students against a fellow male student, she shows that the male accused of sexual assault framed his actions as ones which suggested mutual engagement. Thus, while the female

defendant stated “He grabbed my hair.” (which clearly foregrounds she did not want that to happen and this action is to be considered as an assault), the male stated “I was caressing her hair” (which draws on the language of consenting sexual relationship and love implying that the woman wanted this to happen.) The male in this case also frequently used agentless passives such as “it was decided that” and “clothes were removed” which do not suggest that anyone in particular was responsible for the actions, or that both of them were jointly responsible. By using the agentless processes, the male sexual drive is categorized as a force which, once provoked by females inevitably has to run its course. Thus certain types of transitivity choices which favoured male perspective, resulted in rape being characterized as consensual sex

1.2.1.2: Indirect sexism

Since direct or overt sexism is constantly challenged by feminists and exponents of language equity, an ambiguous way of using the English Language with the view to discriminating against females has emerged. As far as indirect sexism is concerned, I will highlight the issue of stereotypes, humour, presupposition and collocation.

1.2.1.2.1: Stereotypes

The notion of stereotype is often evoked when discussing sexism. But it is important not to over-generalize about stereotypes of men and women since they are structural inequalities between males and females. As Cameron (1995) argues, stereotypes take a form that is context-specific and connected to local forms of social relations. In the same vein, Mills (1995b) views that stereotypes stem from some extreme perceived or imagined aspect of some members of an out-group’s behavior which is hypothesized and then that feature is generalized to a group as a whole. To put it differently, a stereotype is based on a feature or set of behaviours which have

occurred in a community but a stereotype is one noticeable form of behaviour which is afforded prototypical status, backgrounding all of the other more common forms of behaviours. (Lakoff, 1987).

Stereotypes are damaging both to men and women since they consist of assumptions about human beings which often clash with people's perception about themselves. To give an example of stereotypical assumption, let's consider an analysis of an anecdote by Cameron (1998 b). Cameron relates how a friend's father when he sits down to eat his dinner, always asks his wife "Is there any ketch-up, Vera?" Although this indirect question will be interpreted as a request, Vera, the wife, always goes and fetches the ketch-up for him. Cameron (1996) comes to conclude that this type of requesting behavior can only be effective if one assumes that women's primary role is to serve men.

Mills (2008) contends that stereotypes of femininity can be considered to be sexist when they are evaluated negatively. As she said:

For example, if we assume that women are more considerate of other people's feelings, this might not necessarily be considered sexist since some might argue that considerateness is a valuable type of behavior. However, if consideration for others is seen as weak or as a waste of time, then it would amount to sexism. (Mills, 2008: 129)

Here again, Mills suggests that we need to analyze and take into account the context of any sentence before labelling it as a stereotype against women.

1.2.1.2.2: Humour

Mills (2008) shows that humour exaggerates certain figures associated with a group or draws on and plays with stereotypical knowledge for comic effect. For instance, humorous

utterances will presuppose that men and women are different and exaggerate that supposed difference. An illustration for sexism being used humorously is the following: one of Mills male colleague was meeting with female colleagues when noticed that the phone call on his mobile phone was from his wife and said: "It's ok, it's the wife." The use of the term "wife" is excessively sexist since there is no equivalent term such as "the husband". And if we take into account the fact that all the women in the room were feminist academics, so he probably assumes that he would be seen to be humorous in his use of this phrase.

A great deal of research on humour has shown that women are often the butt of jokes by males (Crawford 1995; Grey 1994; Banks and Swift, 1987). Crawford (1995) reported that humor is used in a way to reinforce unequal power relations; for example, male doctors tend to tell jokes and female nurses tend to laugh at them. The following is the example of humour about men and women sent to Mills by her colleagues and which have been used as research data:

Women's language translated

Yes = No

No=Yes

Maybe =No

We need = I want

We need to talk = I need to complain

Sure, go ahead = I don't want you to

Do you love me? = I'm going to ask for something expensive

You have to learn to communicate = just agree with me

Men's language translated

I'm hungry = I'm hungry

I'm sleepy = I'm sleepy

I'm tired = I'm tired

Do you want to go to a movie? = I'd eventually like to have sex with you

I love you = Let's have sex now. (Mills 2008, 143)

The humour in this type of e-mail resides in the fact that even though males and females are represented as polar opposites, both of them are represented as ridiculous. The message shows that men are thought to be obsessed by sex and women are represented as manipulative. What makes this message an instance of indirect sexism, as Mills (2008) argues, is that the perspective from which this text is constructed is predominantly androcentric; that is from a masculine perspective. Women are represented as saying exactly the opposite of what they mean; they are portrayed as manipulative, ambiguous, self-centered, selfish, and materialistic. Men, on the other hand, are represented in a more positive light as direct, plain-speaking and obsessed with sex.

1.2.1.2.3: Presuppositions

Presupposition is difficult to challenge since it is necessary to make overt the assumptions upon which the sexism is based. Presupposition as an indirect sexism is often resorted to because it helps to mask the sexism and gives the speaker the potential for denying any intended sexism. For example, in the phrase: "So, have you women finished gossiping?", there are a number of presuppositions about women and talk which would need to be unveiled before the phrase could be responded to: women talk is trivial, women engage in gossiping more than men, two women talking together can be assumed gossiping, etc. The question as it stands

demands a “yes” or “no” answer and it is problematic for those who want to take issue with the presupposition. In other words, any answer to that question will confirm the stereotype which fosters the idea that women like gossiping and their talks are trivial.

Eckert and Mc Connel-Ginet (2003) have also analyzed the functioning of presuppositions. They mention that very often words such as “director” presuppose a male referent and when they are followed by the pronoun “she”, there may be a feeling of disjuncture. In the same vein, Eckert and Mc Connel-Ginet show that when someone remarks that a woman is tall, they might be conveying that she will have a hard time finding a suitable boyfriend drawing on non-linguistic assumption about relative heights in heterosexual partnering and also taking it for granted that her finding a boyfriend is important. It all comes down to saying that a tall woman will find it difficult to have a boyfriend since having a boyfriend is essential to women.

Hellinger and Bussman (2001) term this indirect sexism social gender. They argue that personal nouns are specified for social gender if the behavior of the associated words can neither be explained by grammatical nor by lexical gender. That social gender is the association of certain terms with stereotypical beliefs about gender. Here is an illustration of social gender:

Many higher-status occupational terms such as lawyers, surgeons or scientists will frequently be pronominalised by the male-specific pronoun “he” in contexts where referential gender is either not known or relevant. On the other hand, low-status occupational titles such as secretary, nurse or school teacher will often be followed by anaphoric “she”. (Hellinger and Bussmann, 2001: 11)

1.2.1.2.4: Collocation

In order to analyze the more complex way in which sexism operates at the moment, Mills (2008) suggests that we should examine the connotation of word associated with women and the collocation of those words. Collocation is concerned with the company that words keep. For example, a word like “greenhouse” generally keeps company with the word “gas”, when you hear the word “greenhouse” in the context of debates about environment, it sets up expectation that it will be followed by the word “gas”, and if that does not appear, the word which appears takes on a marked quality.

There are a certain number of words which do not appear to be sexist in themselves but which collocate or are associated with a range of negative connotations and lexical fields of negative terms. Clark (1998) analyzed the ways the word “mum” is interpreted in the following headline from the British rightwing *Sun Newspaper*: “Girl, 7, murdered as mum drinks in pub”. In this headline, the word “mum” is used to blame women in a way in which the word “Dad” is not. What is more, a news report in a *Sheffield Newspaper*, the Star (2004), about a woman who had been sent to jail on a part-time basis for trying to defraud the Social Services, referred to her as “part-time fail hand mum”. The fact of this woman being a wife is referred to repeatedly throughout the report but is not relevant to the crime she has committed. “Divorcee”, “single mother”, “lone parent”, “working-mother” and “career woman” are also not sexist in themselves but collocate with words with negative connotations or are used in situations where problematic issues are discussed. “Lone parent”, for example, is nearly always used in newspaper reports in relation to problems of drug abuse, council tax fraud, or lack of discipline in relation to children.

Romaine (2001) examines the 1995 British National Corpus for the collocation of spinsters and while she finds that there are some fairly neutral occurrences such as “66 years old”

and “American”, the majority of the words collocating with spinsters have negative connotations. They include gossipy, nervy, over-made up, ineffective, jealous, love/sex, frustrated, etc. According to Romaine (2001), collocation in this sense helps to reinforce stereotypical beliefs about women. That’s why she rightly argues from the above example that:

This example shows how the connotations of words do not arise from words themselves but from how they are used in context. The meanings of words are constructed and maintained by patterns of collocation. Collocation transmits cultural meanings and stereotypes which have built up over time. (Romaine, 2001: 160)

1.2.2: Gender-related differences

Lakoff (1973), one of the major scholars in the field of language and sex, describes six major characteristics of what she has termed “women speech”. It is nevertheless necessary to note that Lakoff has based her claims on introspection not on empirical studies. The six characteristics are the following:

1.2.2.1: Lexical choices

According to Lakoff (1973), certain words almost occur exclusively in women speech. These include terms such as “mauve” and “chartreuse”. Moreover, it is claimed by Lakoff that women use empty adjectives such as *divine* and *cute* which are devoided of any connotation of power compared to men’s adjectives like *great* and *terrific*. These assumptions by Lakoff were challenged by Wolfson and Manes (1989) in the study of complementing behavior among speakers of American English. The study revealed that one of the five most common adjectives used both by men and women is *great*, the adjective *cute* was found to occur equally in both the speech of men and women whereas the adjective *divine* did not occur at all in the data. Lakoff’s

work due to its provocative features had given rise to a considerable number of studies with the goal of examining men and women's speech.

1.2.2.2: Question intonations in statements

Here, Lakoff's claim is that women show non-assertive behaviour by using question intonation in conjunction with declarative sentences. That is, instead of making direct statement, women make suggestions or request agreements from their addressee(s). For example, in an answer to a question like "When will the dinner be ready?", women will respond not with a statement, but a question intonation response such as: "Oh, about eight o'clock?"

1.2.2.3: Hedges

Along with the use of question intonations for statements goes the frequent use of hedges and tag questions. Lakoff states that rather than making straight forward statements, women request the agreement of their interlocutors by addressing a tag question (e.g. he is a nice guy, isn't he?). With respect to hedges, Lakoff includes all modifiers which serve to make a statement less than an assertion. Therefore, the use of the word "kind" in a sentence like "It's kind of hot here," or the expression "sort of" in a sentence like "I'd sort of like to see that movie," would be considered as a hedge.

However, it is noteworthy about Lakoff's claims to mention that depending on the intonation of the utterance, a tag question can serve just as easily as a threat or an expression of anger. Expression illustrating might and fear is, "So you think you get away with that, do you?" and an expression of anger could be: "You didn't write that report, did you?"

1.2.2.4: Emphatic Modifiers and intonational emphasis

The claim here is that women use modifiers *so*, *such*, and *very* to give emphasis to their utterances much more frequently than men do. Moreover, they combine this usage with intonation out of proportion with the topic of the phrase. Thus, an expression like “It’s so beautiful” is labeled feminine.

1.2.2.5: Hypercorrect grammar and pronunciation

The fifth characteristic of women’s speech according to Lakoff is that they tend to use more formal syntax than men. They also use forms of pronunciation closer to the prestige norms and speak more formally than men do in similar situations. Early sociolinguistic study evidenced the hypercorrect grammar and pronunciation in women speech. Labov (1960) and Trudgill (1972) noticed in women speech a style shifting to prestige norm. In one of their studies, it is appreciated that the lower-middle class in America showed the greatest tendency to use prestige forms in careful speech and when sex is isolated as variable, females demonstrated hypercorrection. Labov justified this by the fact that children were cared for by women and majority of schoolteachers belong to middle-class women; therefore children are exposed to hypercorrect forms and acquire it. Trudgill, finding a similar pattern in Norwich speech, justifies the use of prestige norms by women by the fact that they lack an occupational identity on their own outside the home, thus they are more likely to be judged by how they present themselves rather than what they do.

An important remark made by Wolfson, about Labov and Trudgill’s studies is that the data upon which these analyses on women speech were based came from upper-middle class academic interviewers who, by virtue of sex and occupation as well as their capacity as

interviewers were in a dominant position vis-a-vis their women subjects. Indeed, neither Labov nor Trudgill took these attributes (sex, occupation) into account in their studies. For example, the female might have spoken differently if the interviewer had been a woman. That is why Wolfson suggested further studies of women speech before the validity of these sociolinguistic studies.

1.2.2.6: Super-polite forms

Lakoff stated that women frame questions and other sorts of utterances with excessively polite forms such as, “Would you please open the window, if you don’t mind”. Of course, Lakoff’s assumption about women speech were based on her own intuitions. That is why, scholars have designed empirical studies to test what has been said. Although these researchers have not confirmed all Lakoff’s views, in few cases the findings contradict them entirely.

Crosby and Nyquist (1977) carried out one of these researches to test out what Lakoff termed female register. Their finding was that sex differences in speech were due to role differentiation. For example, investigating the way both men and women spoke to police personnel, they showed that both sexes used speech forms that have been characterized as belonging to female register. That is why instead of using the term female register, Crosby and Nyquist spoke of “client speech”.

In order to test out Lakoff’s claims on the differences in the speech of men and women, O’Barr and Atkins (1980) carried out a study to see how the role and status of the speakers in courtroom situation will affect the extent to which the features Lakoff identifies will occur. These researchers, over a thirty-month period, sampled 150 male and female witnesses and demonstrated that the features characterized by Lakoff as women language were neither limited to women nor the characteristics of all women. O’Barr and Atkins based on this study, suggested

that what Lakoff called “women’s language” would be more appropriately referred to as “powerless language”.

In addition to that, O’Barr and Atkins (1980) mentioned that speakers who used “powerless language” were less convincing, less intelligent, less competent, and less trustworthy. The researchers made use of matched guise test in which male and female actors were tape-recorded as they played the part of witnesses; each giving two samples of testimony. In one case, they use “women feature” and in the other omitting them. The results showed that women who did not use these features were heard as more convincing than those who did.

Brower et al. (1979) investigated the speech form used by men and women in central Station in Amsterdam and recorded interactions involving two ticket-sellers one male and one female. They tape-recorded customers requesting tickets and information of the clerks to test for specific features of speech which they sampled as female speech. Much to their surprise, Brower et al. found that part of women language occurred both in the speech of male and female customers and both of them use these features to male ticket-seller not to the female. Both men and women customers were much more polite and non-assertive with male-ticket seller while they were more direct and less polite with the woman. A strong evidence that the sex addressee was an important sociolinguistic variable.

Chapter two: Antisexism in the novel

2.1: Inclusive language

The most significant manifestation of sexism in the English language, as I recall in the theoretical base of this dissertation, is the generic use of the masculine pronoun “he” and its variants (him, himself). Put differently, it is the use of the masculine pronoun and its variants to collectively refer to men and women. The following extracts from *Everything Good Will Come* show an inclusive use of pronouns viz. a use of pronouns which neither excludes males nor females.

- (1) “*Everyone* told me I would stare and I believed *them*” (p.86)
- (2) *Anyone* who bullies you, beat *them* up” (p. 42)
- (3) *Everyone* knows about Aphrodite, but ask *them* about Oshun” (p.114)
- (4) “If *anyone* was measuring any ingredient... that *they* really didn’t know what *they* were doing” (p.124)
- (5) “The child of a black *person* and white *person*” (p.159)
- (6) “Every African *person* in the world represented in Lagos” (p.163)
- (7) “*Everyone* said my mother-in-law was nice. I wouldn’t believe *them* until I’d heard a true word pass her lips” (p. 181).
- (8) “No matter how much money a *person* had they would find *their* bowel” (p.196)
- (9) “If you detain *someone*, shouldn’t you at least tell *their* relations?” (p. 225).
- (10) “But what made a *person* cross the frontier of safety?” (p.258)
- (11) “They are looking for *someone*, *anyone* who can be their *spokesperson*” (p.163)
- (12) “*Everyone* is talking about you, *they* say you left for no reason” (p.323)
- (13) “I cared for *someone* and I enjoyed showing *them* courtesy” (p.157).

(14) “If *someone* put *their* hands around a child’s neck and applied the slightest pressure” (p.133)

In (1), (3), (7), and (12), the indefinite pronoun *everyone* has been referred to by either the subject personal pronoun *they* or the object personal pronoun *them*, a non-inclusive language will merely consist in the use of s/he to refer to the indefinite pronoun *everyone*. The same analysis is valid for (4) where *anyone* has been referred to by *them*.

In the same way, in the excerpts (5), (6), (8) and (10), the lexical item *person* is another telling example of the use of an inclusive language in *Everything Good Will Come*. In fact, by avoiding to draw on the lexical item *man* which connotes sexist, the novelist has abided by the general rules of educated English of the years following the politically correct speech debate of the late 1980s.

2.2: Gender-related differences

In this sub-section, I have addressed the alleged differences between male and female speech. I have investigated both sexes’ character idiolects in the light of a few theories about women’s way of speaking.

2.2.1: Lexical choices

(15) “Ah, this one, she is a terrible one” (p.38) (Sheri)

(16) “Heh, heh, I’m beating you” (p.38) (Sheri)

(17) “My mother hates you” (p.59) (Enitan)

- (18) “If she kills people and can’t remember, how can she tell me she tells them?”. (p. 260)
(Grace Ameh)
- (19) “You treat us terribly as if we don’t have enough trouble” (p.263) (The loud woman)
- (20) “The fool touched my breast, I slapped his face.” (p.265) (Mother of Prisons)
- (21) “I will damage that precious pregnancy of yours” (p. 267) (Mother of prisons)
- (22) “Ate like elephant, that man. Greediness killed him not me.” (p.271) (Mother of prisons)

Lakoff’s claim about lexical choices is that certain words exclusively occur in women speech. These words include terms such as “mauve” and “chartreuse” which are said to be devoided of any connotation of power if contrasted with men’s words like “great” and “terrific”. In the above mentioned excerpts from female characters, words which connote power are noticeable. For instance, in (15), the qualifier “terrible” shows power. Likewise, the verb phrase “slapped his face” in (20) is nothing else but a mere expression of violence as well as “damage your pregnancy” in (21).

2.2.2: Question intonation in statements

- (23) “You’re still sulking?” (Sunny Taiwo) (p.41)
- (24) “Yes sir, at the back?” (St. Patrick boy) (p.51)
- (25) “You were studying in England?” (Male lecturer) (p.53)
- (26) “You don’t regret giving up?” (Mike) (p.86)
- (27) “You think it’s easy to find work these days?” (Sunny Taiwo) (p.123)

- (28) “If one person gets pushed, you will run round this school, you hear me?” (Mike) (p.132)
- (29) “You think we’re equal now?” (Sunny Taiwo) (p. 116).
- (30) “You don’t like good things, madam socialist?” (Sunny Taiwo) (p.126)
- (31) “An... an innocent man is locked up and I mustn’t say anything?” (Sunny Taiwo) (p.191)

The use of question intonation in statements by females, as Lakoff maintains, reveals their non-assertive behaviour. The above mentioned excerpts are question intonation statements used by male characters. In the light of the instances of question intonation statements, it can be argued that women are not its exclusive users. In addition, women cannot be said to be non-assertive on the grounds that they frequently draw on question intonation in statements.

2.2.3: Politeness

- (32) “Tell her I need more rice, please?” (Peter) (p.117)
- (33) “Would you like some beer?” (Mike) (p.134)
- (34) “Would you mind if I told you something?” (Niyi) (p.160)
- (35) “But I don’t have to announce it before you’re satisfied. Now please” (Niyi) (p.232)
- (36) “Please, sir. My wife’s father is locked up. Please release him sir.” (Niyi) (p.233)

Lakoff’s contention about politeness is that women make use of excessive polite forms to frame their utterances. This type of behavior is highly associated to non-assertiveness which is alleged to be a female speech characteristic. In this research work, I have come up with utterances with the use of polite forms made by male characters. The use of “please” in (32),

(35) and (36) or the occurrence of the respect form “would you mind” in (34) are instances of politeness. Then, politeness which is resorted to by either male or female characters is not to be necessarily viewed as non-assertiveness.

2.2.4: Transitivity

(37) “If a woman sneezed in my country, someone would call her a feminist. I’d never looked up the word before, but was there one word to describe how I felt from one day to the next? And should there be? I’d seen the Metamorphosis of women, how age slowed their walks, stilled their expressions, softened their voices, distorted what came out of their mouths. They hid their discontent so that other women wouldn’t deprive them of it. By the time they came of age, millions of personalities were channeled into three prototypes: strong and silent, chatterbox but cheerful, weak and kindhearted. All the rest were known as horrible women. I wanted to tell everyone, “I! Am! Not! Satisfied with these options!” I was ready to tear every notion they had about women, like one of those little dogs with trousers in their teeth. They would not let go until there was nothing but shreds, and I would not let go until I was heard. Sometimes it felt like I was fighting annihilation. But surely it was in the interest of self-preservation to fight what felt like annihilation? If a person swiped a fly and the fly flew higher, would the fly become a flyist?”

The analysis of the transitivity patterns in terms of processes has been summed up in the following table:

Table 1: Account of the different processes identified in the extract.

Process types	Occurrences
Material processes	17
Mental processes	08
Intensive processes	04
Verbal process	01
Behavioural process	01
Existential process	01
Circumstantial process	01
Number of processes identified	33

Details about identification of the processes are shown in Appendix 2

The figures of the above table reveal that material processes rank first with half of the overall number of the processes (seventeen out of thirty-three). Mental processes come second (eight out of thirty-three). Four intensive processes appear in the extract. Each of the following processes appears once: verbal, behavioural, existential and circumstantial.

The predominance of material processes over the other type of processes indicates that most of the clauses are about doings. In other words, the excerpt is mostly concerned about actions. Since mental processes come second, it suggests the fact that the excerpt has something to do about feeling and thinking. The few occurrences of intensive processes attest to the fact that the extract under scrutiny does not emphasize the quality of the participants.

2.3: Assertive female characters

(38) “I want to be something like... like president.

- Eh? Women are not presidents.
- “Why not?” “Our men won’t stand for it. Who will cook for your husband?”
- “He will cook for himself”
- What if he refuses?”
- “I will drive him away” (p.33)

(39) “Which one of our men really treats women well? I don’t know many.” (p.103)

(40) “Now, where I differ from most women is, if you lift your hand to beat me, I will kill you
God no go vex” (p. 107)

(41) “Next year, you’ll be paying your own rent. But this, this, I have to tell you is rubbish.
You’re bright, you’re young, and this man is treating you like his house girl.” (p.138)

(42) “I don’t know why we continue to follow native law anyway when civil law is in
existence. It has no moral grounding, no design, except to oppress women.” (p.141).

(43) “Show me one case: Just one, of a woman having two husbands, a fifty-year-old woman
marrying a twelve-year-old boy. We have women judges and women can’t legally post bail. I’m
a lawyer. If I were married I would need my husband’s consent to get a new passport. He would
be entitled to discipline me with a slap or two, so long as he doesn’t cause me grievous bodily
harm.” (p. 141)

(44) “Never make sacrifices for a man. By the time you say look what I’ve done for you, it’s too late. They never remember.” (p. 173)

(45) “Why can’t you go to the kitchen? What will happen if you go? Will a snake bite your leg !” (p. 184).

(46) “Human rights were never an issue till the right of men were threatened. There’s nothing in our constitution for kindness at home. And even if the army goes, we still have our men to answer to. So, what is it you want women to say?” (p.193)

(47) “My one rule, whenever I was hosting was that the women should not serve their husbands food. That always brought a reaction from them: “Well, you always speak your mind. “From their husbands: “Niyi, your wife is a bad influence! From Niyi himself “I can’t stop her. She’s the boss in this house.” (p. 196)

(48) “From childhood, people had told me I couldn’t do this or that, because no one would marry me and I would never become a mother Now, Now, I was a mother.” (p. 317)

(49) “In my 29 years, no man ever told me to show respect. No man ever needed to. I had seen how women respected men and ended up shouldering burdens... and the expectation of subordination bothered me most. How could I defer to a man whose naked buttocks I’d seen? Touched? Obey him without choking on my humility like a fish bone down my throat. ” (p. 184)

(50) “My classmates were singing another song now, this one a jazz standard and I joined them, thinking of Damola” (p.57)

Most of the theories discussed in this paper about sexism in the English Language bring about the idea that women are not assertive. An investigation into antisexism in the novel should,

for example, provide instances of assertive female characters with the view to proving that Atta's debut novel is not a sexist one. In actual fact, what strikes any alert reader after a perusal of the novel is the way female characters regardless of their social background hold astonishing views.

Right in the first part of the four that the novel is divided into, the discussion between Enitan and Sheri, as illustrated in (38), is a telling evidence of female assertiveness. Enitan, from her childhood, has decided on a career in a field which can lead her to the highest level of the society turning down the idea that supports the belief that women should be defined by their role in their household. Enitan's opinion in (38) appears to be a need for women to break the ice wall that confines them to an inferior position. In the same way, Sheri, though from a poor education background, holds the view that men are no longer charming princes who care for their lovers; which is why females should fight for themselves. Enitan, in (41), sides with Sheri since she strongly advises the latter to find her way out through hard work rather than behave like a house girl who is to be dictated to on the right way to go.

(49) is another good instance of how women view their relationship with their husbands. Enitan, here, refuses to play second fiddle as disobeying a man's orders does not mean disrespect because if a man wants her respect and obedience, then he must earn it. The assertiveness of female characters in the novel seems to be all-pervading regardless of generations. Enitan's mother, in sentence (44), out of the bitter experience which results from the falling apart of her marriage, comes to conclude that women should not devote their lives caring for their male counterparts who, in return, are not ready to do the same.

The quest for independence or the need for women to free themselves from men's domination favours female assertiveness in the novel. For example, Enitan totally disapproves

of the law system which favours women's oppression. In sentence (42), Enitan holds the view that the implementation of native law while civil law exists is nothing else but a deliberate way to belittle females. Besides, the fact that women should resort to their husband's consent before getting their passport, as shown in sentence (43), confers an advantage on men while it confines women to subservient position. This reinforces the stereotype that women are not intelligent enough to decide for themselves. On the same issue of Enitan's reproof of the law system, she maintains, in excerpt (46), that human rights should be rightly termed "men's right" since they advocate for men's right and turn a blind eye to women's issue. Another case of female assertiveness which reflects women's rebellion against patriarchal dictates is shown in (50). In fact, women are assumed to be passive in love affairs and even though they take to somebody, they are expected not to show it overtly. By joining her classmates thinking of Damola, Enitan definitely brings to the fore her relationship with her boyfriend

Female assertiveness in Atta's novel has also been explored regarding the issue of kitchen and cooking. Enitan hardly understands why her husband always refrains from cooking or going to kitchen. Similarly, in (55), Taiwo's daughter speaks her mind by questioning the social convenience which promotes the idea that women should serve their husbands foods. The issue of kitchen is quite important in illustrating how Enitan, the main character in the novel, opposes the stereotype which fosters the idea that kitchen is a place to be kept for women while men are either making fun or sitting in front of the screen.

CHAPTER THREE: Discussion of the findings and sociolinguistic justification of the author's idiolects

3.1: Discussion of the findings

The most significant manifestation of sexism in the English Language is both the use of generic terms to refer to individuals of indefinite sex and the use of generic masculine pronouns and their variants to address both males and females. The analysis of Atta's language shows that she has made an effort to avoid the use of masculine pronouns to collectively refer to males and females. As discussed in the earlier chapter, the fact that *everyone*, *someone* and *anyone* have been anaphorically referred to by *they* or *their* is a sheer instance of the use of an inclusive language. In addition, the use of the lexical item *person* rather than the highly sexist *man* attests to the novelist's attempt not to exclude females. Atta's use of non-sexist or inclusive language reveals how the writer has kept abreast of the educated variety of the English Language decades after the heyday of political correctness in the 1980s.

It, all the same, stands to reason to emphasize a noteworthy remark about the use of inclusive idiolects in *Everything Good Will Come*. Actually, the use of non-sexist language suggests a gender equality. It brings to the fore the idea that the novel does not promote any domination or supremacy of the male gender over the female one. About the use of male dominating language, Koussouhon (2009) forcefully argues that most West African novelists and their East African counterparts use sexist language in their literary productions thereby excluding females. If we take into account that a gender neutral language had not gained currency in those years, we can definitely account for the politically correct language drawn on in *Everything Good will Come*.

Another area of investigation in the analysis of antisexism in Atta's novel has to do with the alleged differences between men and women speech. Unlike Lakoff's theories, women's idiolects are connoted with power. In few cases, some female characters' idiolects are nothing but sheer expression of violence. As a matter of fact, the rationale behind women's use of words devoided of connotation of power is non-assertiveness. Since women are expected to be docile and non-assertive, their idiolects should reflect this behaviour by being highly dominated by adjectives which does not show power. *Everything Good Will Come* does not portray female characters in such a subservient position.

Question intonation in statements is assumed to be a feature of female speech since it amounts to non-assertiveness. As the novel displays quite a number of questions intonation in statements, this paper has focused on the ones used by male characters. Since there are occurrences of this idiosyncratic feature of female speech in male characters' idiolects, it is possible to draw a provisional conclusion. In fact, in the light of the analysis of a few male idiolects, sex is not a variable in using question intonation in statements. Here again, the analysis of the novel does not approve any non-assertiveness of the female characters on the basis of question intonation in statements.

The excessive use of polite forms by women is said to typify female speech and is associated with non-assertiveness. (Lakoff, 1974). My analysis of polite forms in the novel displays instances of politeness which are used by male and female characters. Politeness, in Atta's debut novel, is not an idiosyncratic feature of women's language. Polite forms, on the contrary, are drawn on by the male and female interactants as a mark of respect or deference.

On the issue of transitivity, it is argued that women are represented as acted upon by other characters, non active and certain types of transitivity choices favour male perspective. (Burton 1982; Ehrlich, 1999, 2001). However, the analysis of the transitivity patterns does not confirm this pronouncement.

In fact, the excerpt which has been surveyed depicts the narrator's opinion about women condition and her expectations as to women's role in the society. The precedence of material processes over the other processes discloses how the novelist emphasises women active role. Another important remark about the material processes is that many of them express concrete and tangible actions. The use of "looked up" in the clause "I'd never looked up the word" or "wouldn't deprive of" in the clause "so that other women wouldn't deprive them of it" or "was fighting" in the clause "I was fighting annihilation" attests to that. The use of material processes reveals that Atta holds the view that women emancipation requires action, commitment from females. Put differently, women need to be strong assertive and active for positive change as to their condition in the society.

The fact that mental processes rank second just after material processes needs to be discussed if one bears in mind that mental processes are highly concerned with meanings of feeling, thinking, knowledge and perception. The use of mental processes suggests that the novelist does not assimilate women emancipation from men's domination and society dictates as a mere violence or physical opposition. Instances of such a view are "heard" in the clause "until I was heard" or "had seen" in the clause "I'd seen the metamorphosis of women" or "felt" in "how I felt from one day to the next". Atta then views women emancipation as an ideal that can come true if women change their traditional ways of thinking and perceiving the realities of their

society. An illustration to this is the fact that the Senser roles in the extracts are exclusively played by females.

To round off about the transitivity patterns, let me discuss the few occurrences of intensive processes. In intensive processes, a quality or a descriptive epithet is assigned to the participant. The participants of the intensive processes are not human beings. This implies that the qualities or the descriptive epithets are not associated with women. It all comes down to saying that every women regardless of their socioeconomic background must play an active part in women emancipation in African societies.

Female assertiveness is a key issue in *Everything Good Will Come*. Atta's novel has given prominence to female characters. They are highly assertive and independence prone. Women assertiveness stands as a need for them to break the patriarchal shackles of the society. Atta's fiction displays female characters who are fed up with coping with men domination and oppression. Those female characters do not want to live like their mothers and undergo the same ill-treatment from their male counterparts. *Everything Good Will Come* highlights a few stereotypes and patriarchal dictates which reinforce men's position and relegate women to an inferior position. Enitan's views about native law is a telling example about how she overtly criticizes the native law which reflects nothing else but societal dictates over women. The bold and astonishing views that Enitan holds has something to do with her education. But education per se cannot account for this assertiveness.

In actual fact, Sheri, Ariola and Mother of the Prisons who are from a poor education background hold vibrant views on the same issue. Sheri, for example, explains that if a man happens to beat her, he will deal with him. (40). This is quite surprising since uneducated women

are first and foremost described as docile wives ready to undergo any treatment from their husbands. Quite surprisingly, Sheri flouts the sacrosanct principle which stipulates that a married woman will never raise a hand on her husband. Ariola (Enitan's mother) likewise is somehow imbued with this assertive spirit. She has gone through severe conditions in order to save her marriage with Taiwo (Enitan's father). The marriage eventually fails and Ariola resorts to church as an escape mechanism. Ariola, from her bitter experience, advises her daughter not to make a sacrifice for a man. (44). In other words, she tells her daughter that a woman should not experience sufferings and pains for the sake of marriage. This view strongly opposes traditional Africa dictates about marriage. In fact, mothers always plead with their daughters to try their best to save their marriage.

In the same perspective, Enitan's assertive views on the issue of kitchen and that of women serving food to their husbands needs to be scrutinized. The issue of kitchen reveals how women resent the idea of serving their men as gods; an attitude which is to be construed as a mild domestic protest. Rebellion against society's dictates is witnessed when Enitan made a move into the relationship with Daramola (50), thereby rejecting the belief that only a man can woo a woman. The above analysis attests to the fact that female characters are highly assertive irrespective of their social and education background. Kehinde et al. (2011:69) corroborate this viewpoint as they argue that "in demythologizing and reconstructing the stifling structures in a male oriented society, Atta instructs women on the way out of retrograde patriarchal domination through the practical actions of gender assertive Enitan, Sheri, Mrs. Ameh and even the Mother of the Prison". Women assertiveness is then a way to break the patriarchal shackles of the society and fight for one's emancipation.

Female assertiveness in *Everything Good Will Come* also has to do with economic independence. Enitan, Sheri and Grace reinforce the belief that women assertiveness can only be achieved when they hold the purse strings. Enitan, owing to her Western education, finds out that women need to be economically independent if they want to carve a name for themselves. Either with Mike or with Niyi, Enitan resents the idea of being dependant on a man and she is ready to pay the price this attitude calls for. Imbued with this economically independent spirit, she has advised Sheri to drop Hasan, the brigadier, so as to start a business and become successful. It is only when one takes into account the fact that Hasan, the Brigadier, caters for Sheri's needs that one understands the significance of Enitan's advice. Similarly, Grace lives on her being a journalist. Kehinde & Mbipom contend that this propensity for women to succeed outside the traditional roles of wife and mother shows how Atta challenges the stereotypical literary portrayal of female characters. Economic independence is to be held as one of the reason behind women assertiveness.

Last but not the least, one should not discuss female assertiveness in Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* without shedding a light on female activism. Activism is, as Akung (2012) argues, another dimension of feminism in the novel. For the sake of understanding, it is noteworthy to remark that feminist theory is highly concerned with the advocacy of women's right based on the belief of the equality of the sexes. (Tuttle, 1986). In this paper, I contend that antisexism is a form of feminism. Female activism is seen when Grace encourages Enitan to fight for her ideals without minding what the society dictates. The same Ameh admonishes Enitan to use her voice to bring about change in the society. The two following extracts show the significance of women activism:

(51) "I've always said, men fight for land, women fight for the family."(p. 288)

(52) “With the military in power without a constitution, there was other recourse besides protest peaceful or violent. I was thinking of my country.”(p.293)

The above excerpts highlight the significance of female activism in the sense that it helps to fight for women’s cause on the one hand and it serves the nation’s cause on the other. Sentence (51), for instance, depicts men’s propensity to fight for their materialistic interest when women are more concerned with the family interest and beyond the entire nation’s issue. Extract (52) shows that women are more concerned with issues that go beyond women interest. Besides, it demonstrates that female characters in the novel under security transcend limits of women’s achievement to address the whole nation’s welfare. This is why Kehinde & Mbipom buttress this claim as they comment that:

The novel also dwells on consideration of women’s quest for a good degree of freedom in society to pursue goals and target which are not and do not necessarily terminate in the mere chase of individual ambition but transcend this to cater for the needs of other women, family members and that fraction of society who do not have as priority the sifting of women.
(p.73)

3.2: Sociolinguistic justification of the author’s idiolects

The investigation into Atta’s language in *Everything Good Will Come* discloses that the female characters are very assertive. In this vein, this subsection sheds a light on what can account for such bold and vibrant views that women hold from a sociolinguistic viewpoint. For me to achieve this goal, I have addressed a few stereotypes against females and analysed them.

(53) “It was polygamy not bigamy. If he pleased, he could beat up his wife, throw her out, with or without her children and leave her with nothing. His relations might plead with him and show her mercy but she had no claim over his property. If he died, under some native customs, his sons would inherit his estate instead of his widow. Sometimes a widow couldn’t inherit land at all.” (p139)

(54) “Even with the progressive customs, widows inherited according to how many children they had and sons could have double the rights of daughters.” (ibid)

(55) “Your grandmother was married off at fourteen, into a household with two other wives, and she had to prove she was worthy of her dowry by cooking better ” (p.141).

(56) “Good women didn’t shout in somebody’s house. Good women didn’t fight on the streets Good women didn’t come looking for men. Good women were at home.” (p.155)

(57) “God had blessed us with a healthy child. Why risk another? But his family wouldn’t hear of it. He had to have a son, so they started threatening that he would take another wife and his mother, that woman who suffered so much herself, threatened me too.”(p.172).

(58) “In my country, women are praised the more they surrender their right to protest” (p.177)

(59) “Woman wrapper was a weak man, controlled by his woman.” (p.182)

(60) “I am disappointed in him. He is afraid like a woman.” (p.192)

(61) “You are not a domesticated woman. You just don’t have that...that loving quality.” (p.210)

(62) “You know an African man cannot die without leaving a son.” (p.287)

(63) “Better to be ugly, to be crippled, to be a thief even, than to be barren. We had both been raised to believe that our greatest days would be. The birth of our first son, our wedding and graduation days in that order... Marriage could immediately wipe out a sluttish past, but angel or not a woman had to have a child .”(p.105)

Extract (53) sums up the stereotypes, clichés and taboos that women face in African societies in general. Atta depicts this reality in her fiction to show the patriarchal set where the plot unfolds. In fact, the excerpt reveals that to be barren is the worst thing that can happen to a woman. Besides, it overestimates children and makes the reader believe that when a marriage is not blessed with a child or more, women are to be held responsible; a stereotype which is here to stay in African societies. In the same way, the issue of child bearing is mentioned in (54) and (57). Sentence (57) clearly indicates that the more a woman bears children the more she is valued. Marriage itself is not valued but only the outcome of this union is celebrated. On the same issue of progeny, excerpts (53), (54) (57), and (62) portray the discrimination that occurs on the basis of children’s sex. In actual fact, a mere analysis of these extracts highlights the idea that male children are praised and have precedence over female ones. (54) shows that a male child is worth two females when it comes to inheritance. (53) disregards females since it connotes that male children are not to be compared to their female counterparts and emphasize the fact that men can supersede their mothers in the same issue of inheritance.

Another attitude which reflects the male centeredness of the set of the novel is to be found in sentences (57) and (62). The former pinpoints the sufferings and pains Ariola (Taiwo’s mother) has gone through because she can’t bear a male child. Consequently, she has to face the anger of her in-laws who cry for a son and meanwhile does her utmost to save her marriage. One can argue that bearing a male child happens to be the string that tightens the union between two

people as a marriage can end up in divorce when a woman fails to deliver a baby boy. The same situation is somehow exemplified in (62) because uncle Fatai tells Enitan that an African man cannot die without leaving a male child. In other words, only male children can take over their parents when the latter are no more.

The above extracts also reveal that women are first and foremost defined by their role in their households. Sentences (55) and (61) chiefly corroborate that women are praised according to how they obey their husbands' orders. In (55), for instance, women must show that they are worth their dowry by cooking and even cooking better. Niyi, in (61), doesn't get along with the rebellious nature of his wife. According to him, being a domesticated woman is a loving quality. Niyi merely implies that the more a woman obeys her husband, the more she loves him. That any ideas associated with females are highly pejorative is to be found in the above mentioned passages. (59 and (60) come to attest to that pronouncement. A weak man is likened to a woman controlled by a woman and being afraid is stereotypically a female attribute.

The analysis of the stereotypes attests to the fact that the novel is set in a patriarchal society. The male-oriented set of the novel supposes that women be relegated to the ground and men climb the top level of the social ladder. In fact, any alert reader could notice a rampant discrimination against females which could have prevented or jeopardized their emancipation. The male-chauvinist set of the novel has also been highlighted by the marginalization of female children whereas male progeny are valued. Orabueze has this to say about male children importance in Nigerian societies:

The Nigerian woman's primary role is that of procreation, of having babies and yet male babies. But society does not only expect her to have

as many babies as fertility provides, she is expected clearly and unambiguously to have as many male children as possible. In other words having male children is the signal achievement through which she can raise her head high and feel a real sense of fulfillment. (Orabueze 2004: 108)

Needless to say those African societies confer supremacy on the male gender over the human species.

With respect to the male dominated set of the novel, one could account for female assertiveness in the novel. In actual fact, the assertiveness that the analysis of the female characters' idiolects discloses is to be ascribed to the marginalization and socio-cultural oppression that women face in traditional society. This explains why Atta portrayed her female characters as courageous, assertive and carving a name for themselves in a male- dominated environment. Women playing central roles in Atta's fiction attest to the need for them to be strong, assertive and independent with the view to breaking up the patriarchal shackles that held them in inferior position.

Conclusion

Antisexism refers to attitudes and practices which oppose all views and theories that belittle or disregard females. In the field of language, it refers to the use of language that does not discriminate against members of a sex (mainly females) with the view to creating the supremacy of the male gender over the human species. Taking into account what has been mentioned so far, this research paper surveys a Nigerian female writer's novel in the light of theories, assumptions and findings about sexism in the English language to see how it abides by a non-discriminating use of the English language. This is why this essay is entitled: Antisexism in Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*.

The essay in its first chapter briefly reviews scholars viewpoints in the field of English language and sex. The first chapter also sheds light on the theories that are to be drawn on to analyse some selected extracts of the novel. On this very point, the theoretical framework discusses direct sexism, indirect sexism and gender related differences. The second chapter addresses the analysis of antisexism in *Everything Good Will Come* on the basis of the selected extracts. The third and last chapter is concerned with the results of the findings and the sociolinguistic justification of the author's idiolects.

The use of inclusive terms shows Atta's attempt to avoid the systematic use of generic masculine nouns and pronouns to collectively refer to men and women. In the same way, the analysis of male and female idiolects to find out whether they obey Lakoff's characteristics of female speech does not obey his assumptions. In fact, linguistic features that are assumed to be female by Lakoff abound in male speech. Therefore sex is not a variable in using what Lakoff has called "female speech".

An analysis of the transitivity patterns from an extract of the novel emphasizes the active roles women play in the novel. As the transitivity patterns show, every woman regardless of the socioeconomic background is expected to take an active part in their emancipation from patriarchal dictates of the male-centered societies.

Female assertiveness is a key issue over which this research work argues. The analysis of some extracts of *Everything Good will Come* attests to the assertiveness of female characters. Females hold bold and vibrant views regardless of their socio-economic background. One of the reasons behind this assertiveness is the need for women to break the patriarchal shackles that maintain them in an inferior and subservient position. Economic independence and women activism have also accounted for female assertive idiolects in Atta's novel.

Gender issues and the inclusive language that they promote are now the concern of many African writers. Female writers like Sefi Atta and many others, unlike the first generation male chauvinist writers, portray assertive female characters who fight with all their might to carve a name for themselves and change the condition of women.

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Appendix

- (1) “*Everyone* told me I would stare and I believed *them*” (p.86)
- (2) “*Anyone* who bullies you, beat *them* up” (p. 42)
- (3) “*Everyone* knows about Aphrodite, but ask *them* about Oshun” (p.114)
- (4) “If *anyone* was measuring any ingredient... that *they* really didn’t know what *they* were doing” (p.124)
- (5) “The child of a black *person* and white *person*” (p.159)
- (6) “Every African *person* in the world represented in Lagos” (p.163)
- (7) “*Everyone* said my mother-in-law was nice. I wouldn’t believe *them* until I’d heard a true word pass her lips” (p. 181).
- (8) “No matter how much money a *person* had they would find *their* bowel” (p.196)
- (9) “If you detain *someone*, shouldn’t you at least tell *their* relations?” (p. 225).
- (10) “But what made a *person* cross the frontier of safety?” (p.258)
- (11) “They are looking for *someone*, *anyone* who can be their *spokesperson*” (p.163)
- (12) “*Everyone* is talking about you, *they* say you left for no reason” (p.323)
- (13) “I cared for *someone* and I enjoyed showing *them* courtesy” (p.157).
- (14) “If *someone* put *their* hands around a child’s neck and applied the slightest pressure” (p.133)
- (15) “Ah, this one, she is a terrible one” (p.38) (Sheri)
- (16) “Heh, heh, I’m beating you” (p.38) (Sheri)
- (17) “My mother hates you” (p.59) (Enitan)

- (18) “If she kills people and can’t remember, how can she tell me she tells them?”. (p. 260) (Grace Ameh)
- (19) “You treat us terribly as if we don’t have enough trouble” (p.263) (The loud woman)
- (20) “The fool touched my breast, I slapped his face.” (p.265) (Mother of Prisons)
- (21) “I will damage that precious pregnancy of yours” (p. 267) (Mother of prisons)
- (22) “Ate like elephant, that man. Greediness killed him not me.” (p.271) (Mother of prisons)
- (23) “You’re still sulking?” (Sunny Taiwo) (p.41)
- (24) “Yes sir, at the back?” (St. Patrick boy) (p.51)
- (25) “You were studying in England?” (Male lecturer) (p.53)
- (26) “You don’t regret giving up?” (Mike) (p.86)
- (27) “You think it’s easy to find work these days?” (Sunny Taiwo) (p.123)
- (28) “If one person gets pushed, you will run round this school, you hear me?” (Mike) (p.132)
- (29) “You think we’re equal now?” (Sunny Taiwo) (p. 116).
- (30) “You don’t like good things, madam socialist?” (Sunny Taiwo) (p.126)
- (31) “An... an innocent man is locked up and I mustn’t say anything?” (Sunny Taiwo) (p.191)

(32) “Tell her I need more rice, please?” (Peter) (p.117)

(33) “Would you like some beer?” (Mike) (p.134)

(34) “Would you mind if I told you something?” (Niyi) (p.160)

(35) “But I don’t have to announce it before you’re satisfied. Now please” (Niyi)
(p.232)

(36) “Please, sir. My wife’s father is locked up. Please release him sir.” (Niyi) (p.233)

(37) “If a woman sneezed in my country, someone would call her feminist. I’d never looked up the word before, but was there one word to describe how I felt from one day to the next? And should there be? I’d seen the Metamorphosis of women, how age slowed their walks, stilled their expressions, softened their voices, distorted what came out of their mouths. They hid their discontent so that other women wouldn’t deprive them of it. By the time they came of age, millions of personalities were channeled into three prototypes: strong and silent, chatterbox but cheerful, weak and kindhearted. All the rest were known as horrible women. I wanted to tell everyone, “I! Am! Not! Satisfied with these options!” I was ready to tear every notion they had about women, like one of those little dogs with trousers in their teeth. They would not let go until there was nothing but shreds, and I would not let go until I was heard. Sometimes it felt like I was fighting annihilation. But surely it was in the interest of self-preservation to fight what felt like annihilation? If a person swiped a fly and the fly flew higher, would the fly become a flyist?”

(38) “I want to be something like... like president

- Eh? Women are not presidents.

- “Why not?” “Our men won’t stand for it. Who will cook for your husband?”
- “He will cook for himself”
- “What if he refuses?”
- “I will drive him away” (p.33)

(39) “Which one of our men really treats women well? I don’t know many.” (p.103)

(40) “Now, where I differ from most women is, if you lift your hand to beat me, I will kill you
God no go vex” (p. 107)

(41) “Next year, you’ll be paying your own rent. But this, this, I have to tell you is rubbish.
You’re bright, you’re young, and this man is treating you like his house girl.” (p.138)

(42) “I don’t know why we continue to follow native law anyway when civil law is in
existence. It has no moral grounding, no design, except to oppress women.” (p.141).

(43) “Show me one case: Just one, of a woman having two husbands, a fifty-year-old woman
marrying a twelve-year-old boy. We have women judges and women can’t legally post bail. I’m
a lawyer. If I were married I would need my husband’s consent to get a new passport. He would
be entitled to discipline me with a slap or two, so long as he doesn’t cause me grievous bodily
harm.” (p. 141)

(44) “Never make sacrifices for a man. By the time you say look what I’ve done for you, it’s
too late. They never remember.” (p. 173)

(45) “Why can’t you go to the kitchen? What will happen if you go? Will a snake bite your
leg !” (p. 184).

(46) “Human rights were never an issue till the right of men were threatened. There’s nothing in our constitution for kindness at home. And even if the army goes, we still have our men to answer to. So, what is it you want women to say?” (p.193)

(47) “My one rule, whenever I was hosting was that the women should not serve their husbands food. That always brought a reaction from them: “Well, you always speak your mind. “From their husbands: “Niyi, your wife is a bad influence! From Niyi himself “I can’t stop her. She’s the boss in this house.” (p. 196)

(48) “From childhood, people had told me I couldn’t do this or that, because no one would marry me and I would never become a mother Now, Now, I was a mother.” (p. 317)

(49) “In my 29 years, no man ever told me to show respect. No man ever needed to. I had seen how women respected men and ended up shouldering burdens... and the expectation of subordination bothered me most. How could I defer to a man whose naked buttocks I’d seen? Touched? Obey him without choking on my humility like a fish bone down my throat. ” (p. 184)

(50) “My classmates were singing another song now, this one a jazz standard and I joined them,

(53) “It was polygamy not bigamy. If he pleased, he could beat up his wife, throw her out, with or without her children and leave her with nothing. His relations might plead with him and show her mercy but she had no claim over his property. If he died, under some native customs, his sons would inherit his estate instead of his widow. Sometimes a widow couldn’t inherit land at all.” (p139)

(54) “Even with the progressive customs, widows inherited according to how many children they had and sons could have double the rights of daughters.” (ibid)

(55) “Your grandmother was married off at fourteen, into a household with two other wives, and she had to prove she was worthy of her dowry by cooking better ” (p.141).

(56) “Good women didn’t shout in somebody’s house. Good women didn’t fight on the streets Good women didn’t come looking for men. Good women were at home.” (p.155)

(57) “God had blessed us with a healthy child. Why risk another? But his family wouldn’t hear of it. He had to have a son, so they started threatening that he would take another wife and his mother, that woman who suffered so much herself, threatened me too.”(p.172).

(58) “In my country, women are praised the more they surrender their right to protest” (p.177)

(59) “Woman wrapper was a weak man, controlled by his woman.” (p.182)

(60) “I am disappointed in him. He is afraid like a woman.” (p.192)

(61) “You are not a domesticated woman. You just don’t have that...that loving quality.”
(p.210)

(62) “You know an African man cannot die without leaving a son.” (p.287)

(63) “Better to be ugly, to be crippled, to be a thief even, than to be barren. We had both been raised to believe that our greatest days would be. The birth of our first son, our wedding and graduation days in that order... Marriage could immediately wipe out a sluttish past, but angel or not a woman had to have a child .”(p.105)

Outline of the transitivity theory

Transitivity is the linguistic expression of processes, participants, and circumstances. Carrying out the transitivity analysis involves determining the process types, participants and circumstances realized in any clause. Here is an overview of the different process types.

Material processes

Material processes are processes of doing. They are processes about real and tangible actions. Their essential meaning is that some entity does something, undertakes some action. As a matter of fact, material processes involve Actors or participants. Some material processes have only one participant: these processes are called middle or intransitive. There are actually clauses in which “someone does something” and are probed by asking, “What did X do?”. Instances of material processes are fall, slip, break, grow, etc.

The two most frequent participants in material process clauses are the Actor and the Goal. The Actor is the constituent of a clause who does the deed or performs the action. It is the subject in traditional grammar. When the clause has only one participant and is active the participant will be Actor:

Anna	cooks	well
Actor	Pr. Material	

The Goal is that participant to which the process is directed, to which the action is extended. It is the participant treated in traditional grammar as the direct object, and it usually maps on to the complement participant in the Mood analysis. The Goal is usually what becomes subject in passive voice.

John	Broke	His pen
Actor	Pr. Material	Goal

There can only be one Goal per clause. In the passive, the Goal becomes the subject as we said earlier and the Actor may be omitted. Example:

Active:

Someone	brought	Some water
Actor	Pr. Material	Goal

Passive:

Some water	Was brought	(by someone)
Goal	Pr. Material	(Actor)

Mental processes

Mental processes are concerned with minding, sensing, feeling, thinking, knowledge and perception. As a matter of fact, mental processes are subdivided into three categories in Halliday's framework which are:

-cognitions made up of verbs of liking, knowing and understanding. Examples of verbs would be: like please, know, think, understand, etc.

-affections consisted of verbs of liking, fearing such as: to like, to fear, to hate, etc.

-perceptions comprising verbs of seeing, hearing and perceiving. Examples are: to hear, to feel, to see, etc.

While material processes could have either one or two participants (i.e. they could be either middle or effective in voice), mental processes must always have or involve two participants. However one participant in the mental process clause has to be a conscious human participant. This participant is called the *Senser* and is referred to as the active participant. The active participant or *Senser* is compulsorily either a human being or an anthropomorphized non-human. In fact, the *Senser* is that conscious participant who thinks, feels or perceives.

Example:

Samuel	Saw	The thief
<i>Senser</i>	Pr: Mental	

The second participant involved in a mental process is a non active participant. Halliday labels this participant the *Phenomenon*. Indeed, the *Phenomenon* is that which is thought, felt perceived by the conscious *Senser*.

Example:

Joseph	felt	The thief
<i>Senser</i>	Pr: Mental	<i>Phenomenon</i>

Halliday identifies two types of embedded phenomenon: Acts and facts

- Acts occur mental processes of perceptions seeing, hearing, noticing, etc. They are realized by our imperfective non-finite clause acting as if it were a simple noun.

For example:

The Lecturer	Saw	His students going home
Sense	Pr: Mental	Phenomena: Act

- A fact (phenomenon) on the other side is an embedded clause, usually finite and usually introduced by a “that” functioning as if it were a simple noun. It can be identified as a Fact embedding because a fact-noun can be inserted before the (explicit or implicit) “that” that introduces it.

Simon	Didn't realize	[That the visitors were spies]
Simon+	Didn't realize	[the fact that the visitors were spies]
Sense	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon: fact

Behavioural processes

Behavioural processes include physiological “doings” and non-directed psychological ones. Behavioural are exemplified in such verbs as: to watch, to look over, to test, to sniff, to listen to, to think, to smile, to laugh, to sneeze, to sleep, to dream, to mind, to look, to breath, to cough, to stare, etc. In spite of their close relationship with mental processes, some behavioral in fact contrast with mental process synonyms. Example: “look at” is behavioral but “see” is mental; “listen to” is behavioural but “hear” is mental.

Majority of behavioral processes have only one participant. Thus they express a form of doing that does not usually extend to another participant. This one compulsory participant is called the Behaver, and is typically a conscious being.

Example:

The wizard	Smiled	Wickedly
Behaver	Pr: behavioural	Cir: manner

Behavioral processes can enclose a second participant that functions as a Range: a restatement of the process. This participant is called the behavior the follow exemplifies it:

Peter's girl friend	Smiled	A lovely smile
Behaver	Pr: behavioural	Behavior

The participant that is not a restatement of the process is called a phenomenon.

The woman	Tasted	Her soup
Behaver	Pr: behavioural	phenomenon

As a rule, behavioural processes occur with circumstantial elements particularly of manner and cause

James	thought over	thoroughly
Behaver	Pr: behavioural	Cir: manner

Father Christmas	Laughed	At the children's childishness
Behaver	Pr: behavioural	Cir: manner

Verbal processes

Verbal processes are processes of verbal action, which implies the fact of saying and all its many synonyms, including symbolic exchange of meaning. These processes are exemplified by verbs like: to say, to ask, to reply, to declare, etc.

A verbal process typically contains three main participants namely: the sayer, the receiver and the verbiage. The sayer is the participant responsible for the verbal process or action. The receiver on the other hand is the one to whom the verbal process is directed or the Beneficiary of the verbal process. The verbiage also called Report or Quote is a nominalised statement of the verbal process: a noun expressing some kind of verbal behaviour. (e.g. statement; questions; retort answer; story).

The school boy	Asked	His father	For some money
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Receiver	verbiage

As it is the case with all process types, circumstantial can occur in verbal processes. But as for the verbal processes specifically, the commonest type is manner circumstantial:

Jude and his friend	Are talking	For some money
Sayer	Pr. verbal	verbiage

Existential processes

These processes represent experience by positing that “that was/is something”. It is of a great interest to distinguish between “there” used as an existential subject and “there” used as a circumstance of location. In fact, the structural “there” is usually unstressed, while the circumstantial “there” is usually stressed and often carries an intonation contour.

Existential processes typically make use of the verb “be” or synonyms such as exist, arise, and occur. The only obligatory participant in an existential process, which receives a functional label, is called the existent. This participant usually follows the “there is/there are” sequence and may be a phenomenon of any kind.

The Existent is often in fact an event (nominalised action). In Existential process, circumstantial elemental (especially of location) are very common.

Example:

There	Were	Repe mangoes	On the mango-tree
	Pr. existential	Existent	Circ: Location

Relational processes

Relationals relate some attributes or identity to some being. The category of relational processes covers the many different ways in which “being” can be expressed in English clauses. The domain covered by relationals is a rich and complex area of clause transitivity. Relational processes are subdivided into two main parts which are: Attributive processes and indentifying

processes. I am going to clarify the basic structural difference between attributive and identifying processes exemplified through the intensive subtypes.

-Intensive attributive processes

These processes involve establishing a relationship between two terms where the relationship is expressed by the verb “be” or a synonym like: seem, appear, become, etc. In the attributive subtype, a quality, classification or descriptive epithet (attribute) is assigned to a participant. The attribute is also nominal group, typically an indefinite nominal (introduced by a/an).

Luke	Is	a hard-working student
Carrier	Pr: intensive	Attribute

As far as the descriptive attribute intensive is concerned, the attribute is a quality or epithet ascribed to the carrier, i.e. “X carried the attribute A”. In these attributive intensives, the attribute is typically an adjective.

Joseph	Is	too brainy
Carrier	Pr: intensive	Attribute

As I said earlier, many other verbs that are synonyms to the finite “be” are made use of in the intensive attributive processes. Some examples would be: seem, smell, grow, turn, remain, taste, stay, feel, etc.

The woman	Remained	patient
Carrier	Pr. intensive	attribute

-Intensive identifying processes

Intensive identifying processes are about defining. Therefore, intensive identifying processes mean that “A” serves to define the identity of “B”. In fact, what is being defined is nominal group, which contains the name. Defining involves two participants: a Token i.e. that which stands for what is being defined; and a Value i.e. that which defines. Token and Value are both realized by nominal groups. The nominal groups in identifying intensives are definite. All identifying clauses are reversible.

Peter	Represents	the brainiest boy in the class
Token	Pr: intensive	Value

The brainiest boy in the class	is represented	by Peter
Value	Pr. intensive	Token

Setting aside, the verb “be”, frequently used in identifying intensive processes, there are many other synonymous verbs such as: equal, signify, mean, refer to, represent, etc.

Example:

Pink flowers	Symbolize	Love
Token	Pr. intensive	value

Circumstantial

The circumstantial relational processes encode meanings about the circumstantial dimensions discussed earlier: location, manner, cause, etc. in the attributive circumstantial, the circumstance is often expressed in the attributive circumstantial, the circumstance is often expressed in the attribute, i.e. which the verb remains intensive, the attribute will be a prepositional phrase or an adverb of location, manner cause, etc. one captures this by showing the conflation of the attributive with the circumstantial element:

The children	were	In the room
Carrier	Pr. intensive	attribute

The circumstantial meaning may also be encoded in the process itself, with the verb meaning “is plus circumstance” the process is specified as “circumstantial” in that case:

The meeting	Concerns	The young
Carrier	Pr. intensive	attribute

It is also possible to encode the circumstantial meaning within either the participants or the process with identifying circumstantial. In case the circumstantial meaning is encoded through participants both the Token and the Value will be circumstantial elements of time, place etc. while the verb remains intensive.

Example:

Last Saturday	was	The last time we met
Taken/circ: time	Pr. intensive	Value/circ: time

Transitivity analysis of the extract

Key

P= Process; Pm= Material process; Pme= Mental process; Pb= Behavioural process; Pv= Verbal process; Pe= Existential process; Pi= Intensive process; Pcc= Circumstantial process; Pp= Possessive process; Pc= Causative process.

A= Actor; G= Goal; B= Beneficiary; S= Sayer, Ph= Phenomenon; Sy= Sayer; Rv= Receiver; Vb= Verbiage; Be= Behaver; Bh= Behaviour; T= Token; V= Value; Cr= Carrier; At= Attribute; Pr= Possessor; C= Circumstance; Cl= Location; Cx= Extent; Cm= Manner; Cc= Cause

1-If a woman (be) sneezed (Pb) in my country (Cl), 2- someone (A) would call (Pm) her a feminist (G). 3- I' (A)d never looked up (Pm) the word (G) before (Cl), 4- but was (Pc) there one word to describe (Cm) 5- how I (S) felt (Pme) from one day to the next (Cl)? 6- And should there be (Pe)? 7-I (S)'d seen (Pme) the Metamorphosis of women (Ph) , 8- how age (A) slowed (Pm) their walks (G), 9- stilled (Pm) their expressions(G), 10- softened (Pm) their voices (G), 11- distorted (Pm) [[what (A) came out of their mouths (G)]]. 12- They (A) hid (Pm) their discontent (G) 13- so that other women (A) wouldn't deprive (Pm) them of it (G). 14- By the time they (A) came of (Pm) age (Cl), 15- millions of personalities (G) were channeled into (Pm) three prototypes (Cm): strong and silent, chatterbox but cheerful, weak and kindhearted (Mn). (16- All the rest (S) were known as (Pme) horrible women (Ph). 17- I (S) wanted to tell (Pv) everyone (Re), 18-"I (S) ! Am! Not! Satisfied with (Pme) these options (Ph)!"19- I (Cr) was (Pi) ready (20)- to tear (Pm) every notion (G) 21- they (S) had (Pme) about women (Ph), like one of those little dogs with trousers in their teeth (Cm). 22- They (A) would not let go (Pm) 23- until there was (Pi) nothing but shreds (V), (24)- and I (A) would not let go (Pm) 25- until I (S) was heard (Pme). 26- Sometimes it (S) felt like (Pme) 27- I (A) was fighting (Pm) annihilation (G). 28- But

surely it (T) was (Pi) in the interest of self-preservation (Cc) 29- to fight (Pm) 30- what (S) felt like (Pme) annihilation (Ph)? 31-If a person (A) swiped (Pm) a fly (G) 32- and the fly (A) flew (Pm) higher, 33- would the fly (T) become (Pi) a flyist (V)?