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RESEARCH

Illuminating Systemic Functional Grammatics (Theory) as a Viable Tool of Digital Humanities

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The focus of the study is the application of Systemic Functional Grammatics (SFG) to text as a facility of meaning-making. Having provided a wide room for technological devices to read and account for elements of a text, it portrays the exercise within the scope of Digital Humanities (DH). The theory, championed by Halliday, describes a text from its systemic configurations to chain structures and social relationship frameworks. To explain the weight of SFG as an interface between text and technology, the author chose a poem, 'Area Boy', in which three perspectives of the mood system, thematic system, and transitivity system are instrumental to expose its nuances. The approach was followed by correlating the three systems together as a comparative analysis. The study reveals that 'Area Boy' operates in declarative clauses with heavy utilization of Subject and Finite. These are organized in marked themes. The contents of the text are represented in material processes (e.g. spent) with supports from both mental (e.g. remember) and verbal (e.g. said) processes. Some of the processes along with circumstances (e.g. Of washing ..., Now that ...) recur as repetitions for emphatic and enhancement purposes. On the one hand, the article concludes that SFG can assist in interpreting textual elements to generate meaning potential. On the other hand, through the SFG's metafunctional applications to 'Area Boy', one can suggest that the society should give a helping hand to the less privileged. Such a behavior can eradicate vices experienced through the 'Area Boys' from the society.

Keywords: 'Area Boy'; Digital Humanities; Mood System; Systemic Functional Grammatics; Thematic System; Transitivity System

Cette étude se focalise sur l'application de la grammaire fonctionnelle systémique (GFS) à des textes comme moyen de facilitation de la création de sens. Ayant pourvu une large marge pour des dispositifs technologiques pour lire et justifier des éléments d'un texte, cette étude présente la mise en pratique dans le cadre des Humanités numériques (HN). Cette théorie,

promue par Halliday, décrit un texte, de ses configurations systémiques à ses structures de la chaîne et structures des relations sociales. Pour expliquer la signification de GFS comme interface entre texte et technologie, cet auteur se sert du poème « Area Boy », où trois perspectives du système de mode, du système thématique et du système de transitivité ont des rôles déterminants dans l'exposition des nuances de GFS. Nous avons ensuite fait une analyse comparative en corrélant les trois systèmes ensemble. Cette étude révèle que « Area Boy » fonctionne en des propositions déclaratives avec une utilisation intensive du Sujet et du Fini. Elles sont organisées en thèmes indiqués. Les contextes du texte sont représentés par des processus matériels (par exemple, *spent*) avec des soutiens des processus mentaux (par exemple, *remember*) et verbaux (par exemple, *said*). Certains des processus, ainsi que des circonstances (par exemple, *Of washing... Now that...*), se reproduisent en tant que répétitions pour des raisons emphatiques et appuyées. D'un côté, cet article affirme que GFS peut aider à l'interprétation des éléments textuels pour produire du potentiel de signification. De l'autre côté, à travers des applications métafonctionnelles de GFS à « Area Boy », on peut suggérer que la société doit donner un coup de main aux moins privilégiés. Un tel comportement peut éradiquer les vices venant de la société et ceux vécus par les « Area Boys ».

Mots-clés: « Area Boy »; Humanités numériques; système de mode; Grammaire fonctionnelle systémique; système thématique; système de transit

Introduction

In the light of development, digitization has become an inevitable phenomenon in human social affairs. As one feels its preoccupation in the physical and social sciences; digitization has also dynamically glided into the humanities, especially, the literary world. As a result, scholars have resolved to employ technological and scientific devices to explore literary items to benefit readers (Burrows 2004; Craig 2004). For instance, Robinson and Saklofske (2017) interconnect computer software, mobile applications, etc. with narratives. The utilization of mobile apps, computer software, as modular systems, assists in synchronizing networks on the perception of narratives. Such effort encourages distance readings and algorithmic appreciations. It is on that critical plane that this study suggests the application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a reliable tool that can facilitate the meaning potential of literary texts. This is because SFL possesses capabilities to provide a type of analysis that can

be utilized for close structural readings with semantic implications. The digitization of literature attracts theoretical terms as Warwick (2016) particularly emphasizes. The deployment of conceptual terminologies to promote digital humanities (DH) situates SFL very viably in this arena. Consequently, the appropriate applications of theoretical techniques, as interpretive strategies, forge lucid and direct partnerships, and cement strong relationships between research components and meanings derived from the materials (Schreibman, Siemens, and Unsworth 2004, xxv). The abilities of the theory to process texts into linguistic devices makes scientific instruments like tables and graphs effective in accounting for grammatical and semantic frequencies in the form of Jockers and Underwood's (2016) quantitative methods. Also, SFL works well, by supporting the computation of clause elements in their complex forms within the framework and methodology as discussed by Bradley (2004), and Drucker (2016).

As stated earlier, the need for a critical inquiry (Warwick 2016) stimulates the introduction of SFL as a reliable lens to manifest the nitty-gritty of a literary item (e.g. poem). This grammatics (Halliday 2013, 29) addresses this operation by characterizing the clauses of a specific poem into both structural labels and contextual situations. Apart from that, SFL considers language in the form of structures within the purview of socio-cultural manifestations (Kress 2010; Bartlett 2013; Dalamu 2017e, 2017h). This could be a reason for drawing a text into two separate planes. In Halliday and Hasan's (1985, 5) sense, "there is text and there is other text that accompanies it: text thus is with, namely the con-text." This notion of elements, associated with the text, pinpoints the production environment of the text. The socio-cultural norms, as Halliday and Hasan (1985) underscore, offer the text much meaningful detail. This is on the grounds that the context meshes with the text and its immediate indices as the unified element of communication.

In every language production, Halliday and Hasan assert, there are two texts. The first text is the internal chains that bind the product of a text together as an indivisible entity of meaning (1985, 24–26). The menus of the structural elements are connected through cohesive ties (Eggins 2004; Dalamu 2018). The second, as characterized, is the context of the language of interaction (Halliday and Hasan, 1985).

This is the totality of the elements in the setting in which the language is applied. One can argue that there is nothing fascinating in analyzing a text for the purpose of its structural components. It is rather captivating when an analyst considers the constituents of a text within the profile of its socio-cultural plane (Ravelli 2000, 29). That suggestion is a probable projector of the text in the domains of cohesion and coherence. Cohesion describes the structure of the text while coherence realizes its context (Thompson 2004). **Figure 1**, below, adds flavor to the text and context abstractions of a piece of language in use.

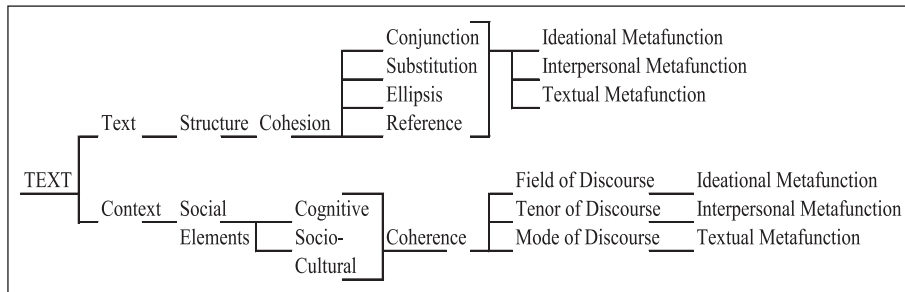


Figure 1: Text and context expressed through coherence and cohesion.

The convention of coherence and cohesion, “merry-go-rounding” the text, ends up at the table of three metafunctions as shown in **Figure 1**, above. This explains the idea that the three metafunctions dominate and remain the focus of SFL. Both the meeting and melting point of coherence and cohesion are the three metafunctions (Halliday 1985; Matthiessen 1993). Through that synthesis, meaning is generated in text. Having said that, there are numerous conceptual frameworks in the theory that can assist in explaining texts. These are very possible without recourse to the celebrated three metafunctions. For instance, part of the grammatical metaphor has capabilities to explore a text independently (Thompson 2004, 220–224). Furthermore, within the domains of SFL, analysts can consider a text from the spheres of contextual, socio-semiotic, and multimodal perspectives (Hodge and Kress 1988; O’Toole 1994; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2003; Kress 2010; Dalamu 2017g). These are some of the incentives that propel the writer to suggest that SFL contains reliable resources useful in DH.

One can feel the waves of DH in Riguet and Mpouli’s (2017) characterization of dialogism of French discourse on literary criticism. As a result, Riguet and Mpouli

discuss how scientific terminologies are “loaned” and adopted, giving those terms new but literary meanings. While Muzny, Algee-Hewitt, and Jurafsky (2017) throw some light on the dialogue, in terms of conversation, as the basis for communicative interactions; Binotti and Azcorra (2017) explain DH values from their great influence on the general public, describing the effectiveness of *Entiéndelo* (a textual explication tool) for all humanity. The authors depict the benefits of *Entiéndelo* as augmenting people’s quality of life. As modern literary communications cannot be totally jettisoned or retired from ancient events, Bogna (2017) and Ciula (2017) elucidate some old and new disciplines in both multi- and interdisciplinary manners (also in Erlin 2016). The correlations draw readers’ attentions to their great significance as well as their interrelationships. Other scholars model language from the perspective of discourse studies in relation to DH (Rodilla and Gonzalez-Perez 2017); expound the concept of “big data” (Castro 2017); reveal unusual non-count nominals in Modern English (Svensson 1998); and elucidate historical discourses of race in literary elements (Lee et al 2018). Of importance is Kreniske and Kipp’s (2014) insight on the influence of DH on the documentation of social values of South African San nationality.

This study, as a contribution to earlier analyses, explicates the application of technology that relies on the result of the application of SFL concepts to the text. As a practice, the analyst has applied SFL to Adesanmi’s “Area Boy” (Adesanmi 2010, 308). This exercise displays the influence that SFL can have on a text in terms of the writer’s style and corpus development. In other words, the paper discusses how technology has assisted the analyst to do a reading of a specific poem (“Area Boy”) within a framework of functional grammar. It is the hope of the author that this will trigger further research efforts, channeled in a similar direction of this course. As a fundamental textually-focused theory, SFL exercises its vitality on the grammar of a language, considering the clause, as the center of analysis. Grammar refers to the structural system of wordings of a language (Yule 1985, 69; Dalamu 2017a, 268) that can be viewed from below, from around, and from above. The functions and analysis of such a language are also carried out in the way that a language communicates (Burke 1969; Quirk and Greenbaum 1973; McGregor 1992; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004).

It is pertinent to argue that the analysis of a quantum of grammatical elements cannot be done haphazardly because grammar itself is an organized event. By implication, a consideration for making meaning from the grammar of a language must not be *operationalized* chaotically. Rather, its organization must be in sequences. Thus, it is also demanded that the theoretical application on grammatical structures must begin from somewhere, that is, its constituted ordering. The concern drives SFL to start the analysis of text from the clause, its nerve, as applied later. This shows that the examination of every grammatical unit and function(s) has a connection with the clause. Thus, it is obligatory for every user of SFL to get acquainted with the clause and varieties of building blocks attached to it in either simple or complex forms. In corollary, Ravelli (2000, 29) points out that the key to beginning a systemic analysis is to identify a clause, which is the hub of grammar. Following Ravelli (2000), the clause is similar in concept to a sentence, except that a sentence pertains to written language, whereas a clause applies also to spoken language. In a specific sense, a clause represents a state of affairs.

X-raying systemic functional linguistics

Unlike so many ideas within schools of linguistics, SFL comes along with many linguistic tickets, as means of constructing and illuminating the thoughts of the exponents. The major exponential ancestors are fundamentally Saussure on Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic (De Beaugrande 1991), Bühler on the three functional models of language (Innis 1987), and Malinowski on Context of Situation (Malinowski 1935; Bailey 1985). The link of Hejlslev to the theory is on Theme that taps its currency from the Prague School (Halliday 1994). Firth is always remembered for the concept of System – a system of systems or being polysystemic (Firth 1957; Butler 1985), while Hasan is notably the propagator of Context of Culture (Halliday and Hasan 1985), and Halliday on the Three Metafunctions (Halliday 1973). However, the configuration, harmonization, and development (to an extent) of the contributions of the intellectual progenitors of SFL's identities rest on Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday.

Actually, Halliday conceives the bright idea of SFL from the confluence of the thoughts of earlier scholars (e.g. Firth). The convergence occurs through the scrutiny and careful selection of useful materials as platforms for constructing SFL.

That insight elevates Halliday's pedigree as synonymous with SFL (Dalamu 2017c). This is because Halliday does not only make choices from scholarly resourceful materials; the sage also champions the compatibility of the raw materials; and moreover, injects invaluable terms to the subjects that SFL accommodates. This study, in that regard, considers Halliday as the architect as well as the mason of the theory.

The centrality of the clause to grammar, as mentioned earlier, cannot be undermined. The fragmentation of the clause produces phrases and words; the elaboration leads to the formation of clause complexes. The writer points out that every statement deployed by an interactant either in the form of the spoken or written language has its origin negotiated in the clause. Such place of occupancy encourages systemicists to make the clause kernel in analyses rather than the sentence. The significance of the veins of the clause operations on the text can be demonstrated, as in **Table 1**, below.

In one way or another, SFL is functionally-cyclical, most especially, in the dominance of the clause in all operations. Besides, point (v), (vi), and (vii), in **Table 1**, link the clause again to the three metafunctions. Beginning the construction of meaning of a text (e.g. poem) from below the clause (e.g. word) to a full-fledged clause and ending the exercise around the clause (e.g. discourse) is, perhaps, a sign

Table 1: Domains of the clause in SFL.

Numbers	Systemic Terms	Grammatical Elements	Examples
I	Below the clause	Words, phrases	Search, a system code
ii	Around the clause	Cohesion, texture, discourse	Engineered differently
lii	Above the clause	Clause complexes	I sing yet dance in church
Iv	Beyond the clause	Metaphorical interactions	Statistical comparisons elevate research
V	Clause as exchange	Mood system	As in Figure 8, below
Vi	Clause as message	Thematic system	As in Figure 9, below
Vii	Clause as representation	Transitivity system	As in Figure 10, below

of building up meaning from the scratch to a broad meaning derivative. It is on that ground that SFL serves as an interface between a poem (e.g. "Area Boy") and technological devices (e.g. graphs) in order to position "Area Boy", as an entity of DH.

Digital Humanities: Historical developments

In the historical development of DH, the name of Roberto Busa is estimable. Roberto Busa was a Jesuit priest who picked interest in building a concordance for the works of Thomas Aquinas in 1949. That assiduous effort charted a pioneering course for what is known as DH today (Ess 2004, 133). Though, a very tedious journey, the objective was to realize the word of Aquinas' writings in what Busa referred to as *index verborum* (Busa 1980). The effect of that singular act seems referential up to this period. In Crane's observation, Busa's attempts transcended any other struggles in the hemisphere of lexemic accountability (Crane 2004, 47). The difficulty experienced, doing manual operations influenced Busa to seek help from IBM to accelerate the counting and ensure accuracy (Burton 1981a, 1981b).

Hockey's perspectives on DH history

Hockey's approach to the history of DH from the effort of Father Busa serves as the point of departure (2004, 4). In this classification, 1949 to early 1970s mark the beginnings where *index verborum* and *cum hypertextibus* are reiterated. The years of consolidation fall within 1970 to the middle of 1980s, witnessing the journal *Computers and the Humanities*, conferences, the writing of computer programs, along with the establishment of computer centers. Personal computers that foster innovation, as Hockey (2004) reports, become necessary for scholarship to snowball the development of DH in 1980s and early 1990s. Of significance in the era is the long-standing impact that reminds the writer of the publication of the *Human Computing Yearbook* for the storage or archiving and campaign of scholarly projects, software, and publications (ibid.). The herald of the World Wide Web (WWW), as the "culmination" in 1990s, becomes the irresistible boost that welcomes researchers to first-class information, perhaps, in any subject. Moreover, WWW gives license to anyone to publish. This promotes scholarly works as much as the elimination of the constraint of printing pages of books. There is no page limitation, and

every publication can be reviewed from time to time. Another great merit of the WWW/URL is that any publication can be accessed from any part of the globe as long as it is not *passworded*. Hockey (2004, 17) submits that, “now that the Internet is such a dominant feature of everyday life, the opportunity exists for humanities computing to reach out further than has hitherto been possible” (also in Svensson 2010; Jørgensen 2016).

Digital Humanities: Definitions and domains

Perhaps, scholars have been wisely and systematically softening academic pedals from defining the term, Digital Humanities (e.g. Burdick et al 2012). This is because DH is a probable subject to expand beyond human imaginations among the sub-contending disciplines (Kirschenbaum 2010, 58). The discipline also addresses many of the research challenges on methodological paradigms (Schreibman, Siemens, and Unsworth 2004, xxx). However, attempts have been made to describe the contents of the fast growing and developing DH. Thus, Busa (2004) claims that DH

is precisely the automation of every possible analysis of human expression (therefore, it is exquisitely a “humanistic” activity), in the widest sense of the word, from music to the theater, from design and painting to phonetics, but whose nucleus remains the discourse of written texts (Busa 2004, xvi).

This perspective is very broad. It is coherent, Busa explains, to all possible human social endeavors. The pointer in the description is the text. Again, at this point, the relevance of SFL to text can be referred. As the nucleus of DH is the text, the same text is the hub of SFL as well as the wheel of language. SFL seems the chair of DH and language because of its theoretical underpinning in both the textual claims and social connections (Wodak and Meyer 2001, 3–9). As such, domains of SFL are contextually-expressed, as publicized earlier in **Figure 1**, in the terminology of cohesion and coherence. The study sees a joint venture between DH and SFL.

DH seems to embrace two customary but academic lifestyles by creating a robust and intertwining relationship between the digits (1, 2, 3, etc.) and the alphabet (a, b, c, etc.). The partnership extends to signs and figures of various

pluralistic annotations such as scientific representations of symbols in different forms, capacities, and functions. This is where SFL can create an interconnection between the two entities by positioning every element of a clause in the appropriate place. This advances the examination of the events of the “humanities” to produce meanings. This opportunity can be a compelling reason for Busa (2004, xxx) to elucidate the evolving but permanent association of humanities and the computer utilization as signaling “The finger of God.” Burdick et al (2012, vii) recognize the communicative divine signature by validating that unlike in the past, researchers in the humanities today live and function in “rare moments of opportunity” with the potential to play a vastly expanded creative role in public life. Computerization influences seem to have aided such transformation.

The testimony of Burdick *et al.* (2012) places a wide gulf between the knowledge of precursors of humanities and the present humanists. The current information age (or golden age) negotiates workable and lasting relationships between human expressions/lifestyles and computer applications unlike past generations. However, as the arts construct enduring relationships with computerization, the disciplines are not in any way retreating from the long-standing tenets of founding fathers. DH is a foremost development of “the purview of the humanities, precisely because it brings the values, representational and interpretive practices, meaning-making strategies, complexities, and ambiguities of being human into every realm of experience and knowledge of the world” (ibid.). This suggests that a major contribution of DH is the creation of additional values into the arts through the applications of computerized interpretative equipment. As such, technological tools are capable of advancing and enhancing the meaning-making of human activities where SFL serves an intermediary function.

Furthermore, the Digital Humanities Manifesto articulates DH as having observed in the discipline an array of convergent practices in two senses. One, it explains that the “print is no longer the exclusive or the normative medium in which knowledge is produced and/or disseminated; instead, print finds itself absorbed into new, multimedia configurations” (Digital Humanities Manifesto n.d.). The usual manner of exercises in the print has changed to an advanced level. Two, “digital

tools, techniques, and the media have altered the production and dissemination of the knowledge of arts, human, and social sciences" (ibid.). It is not contentious that DH has taken the arts from their deep-seated artistry to a sustainable "scientific" level of functionality. Perhaps, sooner or later, all disciplines in the Ivory Towers rather than awarding B.A. degree titles in the humanities, will transit to awarding a B.Sc. to every bachelor of a university. This projection depends on applications of computational infrastructures to the humanities, which have the capacity to realize the dream proposed (Edmond 2016; Montfort 2016; O'Donnell, Walter, Gil, and Fraistat 2016). Responsibilities of DH dominate all fields, where human beings operate (Butler-Kisber 2013). This is because the applications of computer facilities are limitless most especially when one correlates every action with the renowned slogans of IBM, *Everything you need to build anything you want* and *THINK* (IBM 2017; Creative Block Inc. 2017). This is made possible and effective because writers of computer programs receive instructions that assist them to produce a program that is parallel to a particular operational need and demand (Peirson, Damerow, and Laubichler 2016). The more the scope of human beings widens the better the areas of DH's occupancy. Among others, DH is applied to linguistics, literary studies, music, graphic arts, and archaeology. (Schreibman, Siemens, and Unsworth 2004).

Remarkable suggestion of John Unsworth

Father Busa, perhaps the most distinguished pioneer of the well-known DH echelons (Schreibman, Siemens, and Unsworth 2004, ix), did not label the subject as DH. Before 2001/2002, Busa and his contemporaneous scholars had been tagging the remarkable activities on the new idea of textual accountability as *Index Thomisticus*, *Lessico Tomistico Biculturale*, concordance, humanities computing, etc. The construction of a universally-acceptable title given to what Busa started in 1949 rests on John Unsworth (Unsworth 2002), the same way that the construct of Discourse Analysis resides in Zellig Harris, and Context of Situation rests on Bronislaw Malinowski (Malmkjaer 2004). The big idea, according to Unsworth, came to him while negotiating the title of the book, *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, with the representative of Blackwell publishing company (Unsworth 2010; also in

Kirschenbaum 2010, 56–57). Although, the labeling rests on Unsworth, DH is a child of circumstance borne per chance.

However, it is pertinent to think back to Busa's assertion on "*Digitus Dei est hic!* i.e. The finger of God is here!" Busa perceives the phenomenon as an outstanding activity involving human beings, yet, charged and influenced by God. That is the rationale for Busa to add that "it is just like a satellite map of the points to which the wind of the ingenuity of the sons of God moves and develops the contents of computational linguistics, i.e., the computer in the humanities" (Busa 2004, xvi). Very salient in the Unsworth's (2010) construct is the adjective "digital." The coinage, in Unsworth's standpoint, appears in order to move away from simple digitization of lexemes. "Digital" as a modifier signals a form of "sporadic" shift from the counting of words into all manifestations of humanistic operations. The "randomization" of the affiliation of computer technological applications to various humanistic domains is a probable factor that has prevented the discipline of DH from one-face value on definition.

SFL: The interface between "Area Boy" and technology

Although, the three metafunctions of SFL – interpersonal, textual, and experiential – are the theoretical concepts of the study; it is significant to demonstrate the function of SFL in the study as manifested in **Figure 2**, below.

The portion in the blue color (identified as A) is the poem, "Area Boy", while the portion in the green color (identified as C) is the technology. On the one hand, "Area Boy" is a piece of literature that contains textual elements with embedded meaning potential. On the other hand, the green color is the facility useful for calibration. Because, it is seemingly difficult for the technological device to approach "Area Boy" in order to generate systemic meaning, SFL (identified as B) bridges the lacuna. Its application processes "Area Boy" structures into countable

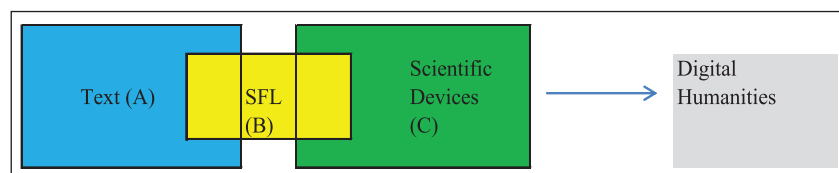


Figure 2: Relationship between SFL and technology.

values that the technology can accommodate. The systemic operations permit the technological facility to act on “Area Boy.” In a simple term, the outcomes of the application turn the whole exercises on “Area Boy” to semiotic slots of SFL, and SFL to computerization devices in order to operate as DH. The theoretical application of SFL is the wheel that turns “Area Boy” into an entity of DH. Besides the current application, as mentioned earlier, SFL with the use of any of its concepts (substitution, ellipsis, grammatical metaphor, coherence, context of situation, etc.) can be applied to texts for meaning-making.

Theoretical breadth

Significantly, a demonstration of SFL as a very resourceful tool of DH inspires the author to adopt the three metafunctions as the relevant conceptual entities. That being said, the three metafunctions, as mentioned earlier, are the core concept of SFL. The applications of the triadic terms to a text provide the target audience structural, paradigmatic, and contextual meanings (Eggins 2004). **Table 2**, below, shows the operational slots of the three metafunctions.

The grammatical spheres of the metafunctions shown in the analyses of **Figures 9, 10, and 11**, below, make it very possible to earmark semantic slots to the structural organs of the clauses of “Area Boy.” The system networks in **Figures 3, 4, and 5**, below, are indicators of the metafunctions, operating from below, from around, and from above. However, some of these functions are basically-intrinsic. Besides, the system network represents the choice that a language user makes out of numerous ones available to the individual. Contextual implications of interpersonal, textual, and experiential metafunctions are accommodated discursively.

Table 2: Three Metafunctions’ operational slots.

Terminology	Grammatical Sphere	Paradigmatic	Context
Interpersonal Metafunction	Mood	System Network	Tenor of Discourse
Textual Metafunction	Theme	System Network	Mode of Discourse
Experiential Metafunction	Transitivity	System Network	Field of Discourse

Mood system

Thompson (2004) probes the interpersonal metafunction as a device that fulfils the “performative” roles of every addresser to the addressee. The concept reveals either constitutive functions or ancillary functions. The speech roles, Thompson (2004, 46–47) emphasizes, permit questions (interrogatives), commands (imperatives), statements (declaratives), and offers (modulated interrogatives) to be realizable in discussions (also in Dalamu, 2017b, 190–193). However, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 111–132) characterize the main structural organs as the mood disposed in Subject and Finite respectively. Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct, in Bloor and Bloor’s (2013) conceptualization, are components of the residue. **Figure 3**, below, explains further the system network of the mood choices.

Apart from exclamation marks and “sets” in English, the choices of the indicative and imperative are clearly open in communicative activities.

Thematic system

Theme and rheme fall into the organizational ideas of a text. A user of a language determines the componential arrangements of the communication as desired (Halliday 1994, 34–67). Apart from that, the function that the language is deployed to achieve

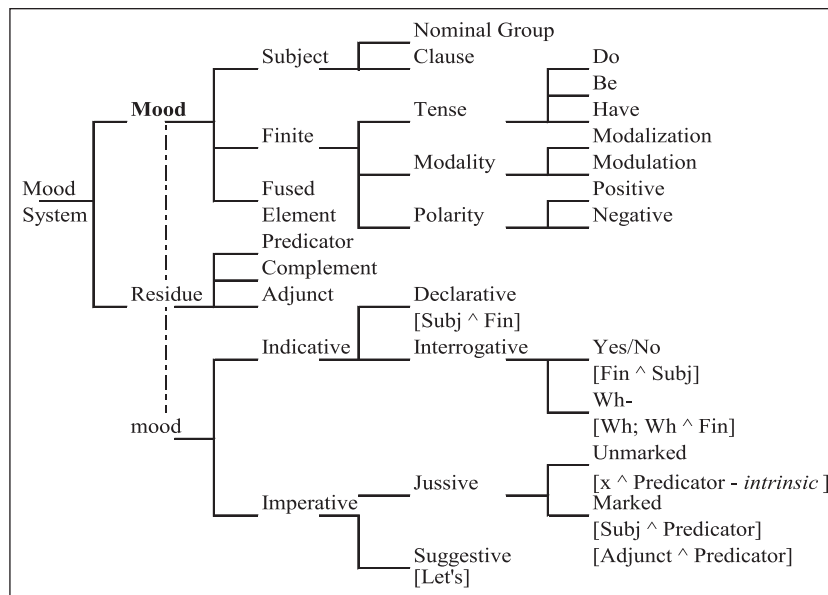


Figure 3: Mood System Network (Thompson 2014).

has a great implication on the background details of a discourse. Rashidi (1992, 192) illuminates the theme as the starting point of the message. That is, the constituent that begins moving the encoder towards the essence of the communication. There is the essential ideational jumping-off point directing the decoder's attention to the ultimate goal of the communication. The theme, in Rashidi's approach, begins a clause irrespective of the linguistic device experienced at the start up. In other words, it gives a track to text productions. It is that operational condition that further influences Rashidi (1992, 197) to describe the rheme as the nub of the message of a clause despite the obligatory appearance of the theme in any construct (e.g. NG, Prep G, VG, Adj G or Adv G). This manifests the essential position of the theme in structures except in a situation of elliptical lexical amenities. Themes of the text operate in different ways. Unmarked theme occurs when the topical theme functions as a subject of the clause. Marked theme occurs when the theme of the clause is not the subject. Topical theme operates whenever participant, process, and circumstance realize the theme. Thematic theme arises before the topical theme. Exclusive discussions of the theme are in Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 64–87), where the point of departure, orientation, and location connecting the social reality realize the theme (Ellis 1987, 113–121; Dalamu 2017f). **Figure 4**, below, reveals the system network of the thematic system of the clause, exhibiting textual, interpersonal, and experiential/ideational elements as the configuration of the multiple themes.

The system in **Figure 4**, below, shows the theme and rheme as two separate tools of interpretations.

Transitivity system

Bloor and Bloor (2004) argue that the experiential metafunction encodes the speaker's experience by allowing language to play a critical role that accommodates the *goings-on* and the participants involved in the activities. In consonance with that perspective, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 168–259) describe the content and participants, sometimes encompassed with circumstantials, as crucial in disseminating information through the experiential (McGregor 1997). Valuable materials are in (Martin 1992; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). **Figure 5**, below, elucidates the experiential metafunction, showing the processes and participants.

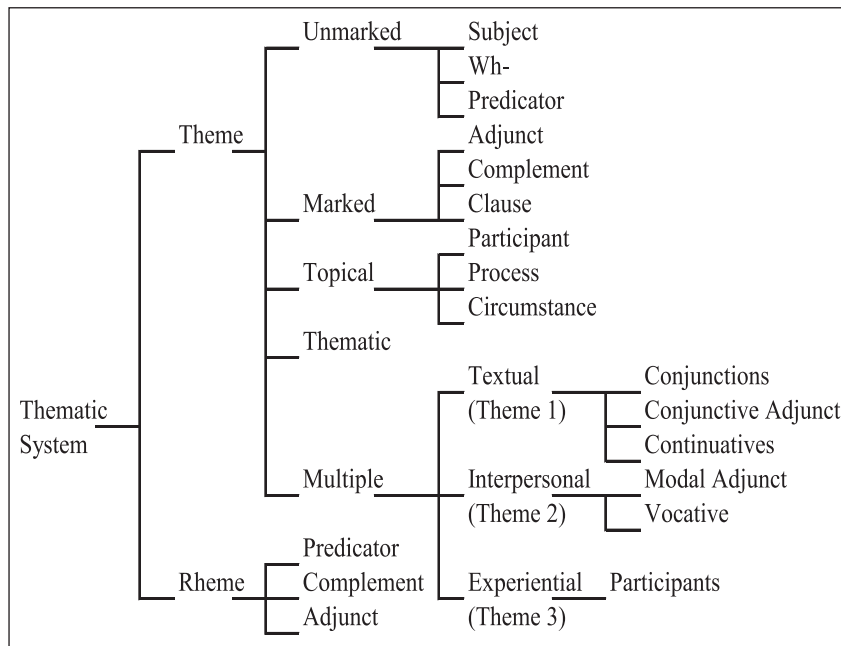


Figure 4: Thematic system network (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014).

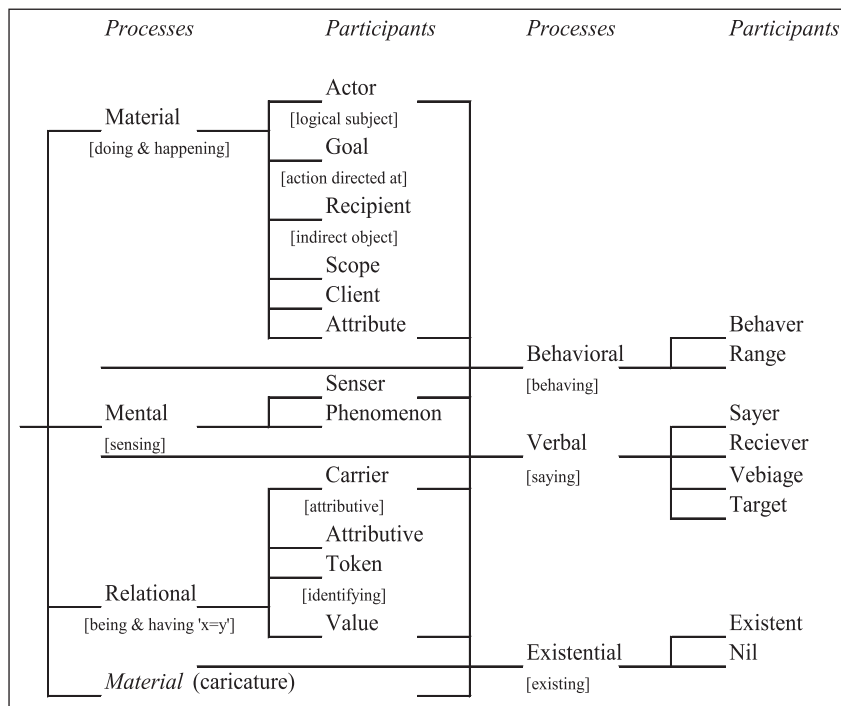


Figure 5: Transitivity system network (Dalamu, 2017i).

Figure 5, above, reveals six processes functioning in the English language. Material processes, mental processes, and relational processes are major while behavioral, verbal, and existential processes are minor. These systemic facilities are minor because behavioral, verbal, and existential occur at the peripheries of the major processes (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Dalamu, 2017d). The occurrence of the processes in a disc-like format is another operational figure that throws more lights on the cyclical nature of SFL (Halliday 1994, 108). The linear sequence of **Figure 5**, above, informs the introduction of the second *material* label as being a caricature.

Figure 6, below, illustrates the compatibility of the interpersonal metafunction, textual metafunction, and experiential metafunction on a clause, indicating their unbroken relationships. The partnership pinpoints the way that meaning potential of a text is realizable in three different systemic forms in order to generate meanings (Bloor and Bloor 2013; Fontaine 2013; Dalamu 2017c).

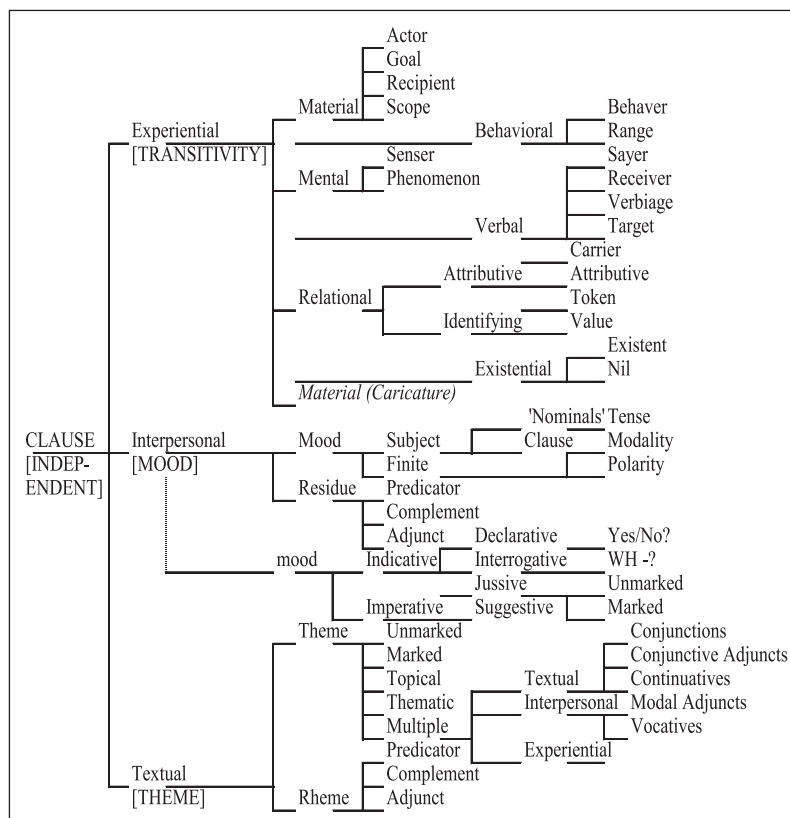


Figure 6: Three metafunctions composite system network (Dalamu 2017i).

This study demonstrates the treaty in the three metafunctions in **Figure 6**, above, in order to serve a good purpose of understanding their usefulness in DH through technological appreciations.

Methodology

The author has chosen the poem of “Area Boy” written by Pius Adesanmi out of the 231 poems in *Lagos of the Poet*, which addresses concerned issues of Lagos State, Nigeria (Adesanmi 2010). Consequently, the book has huge implications concerning Lagos and the Nigerian society at large. It is also a means of creating a global awareness of the meaning of “Area Boy” in this part of the world. Above all that, the choice of the poem allows the study to exhibit resultant effects of SFL on a literary text.

Design

“Area Boy” has been divided into clauses with the systemic traditional style of the slash demarcations, that is, “///” and “//”. “///” signifies the beginning and the end of a stanza while “//” serves as a simple clause separator. These are the reasons for observing slashes in the data presentation, below. The analysis of the “Area Boy” has undergone three different spheres of the mood, thematic, and transitivity systems in order to reveal the application of each of the three *metafunctional* instruments in clear functional terms. In the mood system analysis, *S* = Subject, *F* = Finite, *P* = Predicator, *C* = Complement, *A* = Adjunct, and *Mod Adj* = Modal Adjunct. The study also uses *Circ* as Circumstance, *Pro* as Process, *Loc* as Location, and *Ident* as Identifying.

Measures

After the systemic analysis, the researcher exploited *AntConc*, a text-computing technology (Laurence Anthony’s Software), to account for the processes in “Area Boy.” The first step was to identify and write down the processes in a piece of paper after which the entire “Area Boy” file was inputted into *AntConc* by selecting the “Open Files” icon in the “Navigation Menu” and the “Concordance” in the “Tool Tabs”. As the “Area Boy” file has appeared in the “Corpus File” window, each process term (e.g. *remember*) was later entered into the *AntConc* window’s dialogue box in the left-hand side of the “Control Panel.” The *AntConc* displayed the frequency in two forms after clicking “Start”. The computing instrument showed the word recurrence in the ‘KWIC Results Window’ and the digit in “Concordance Hits” as shown in **Figure 7**, below.

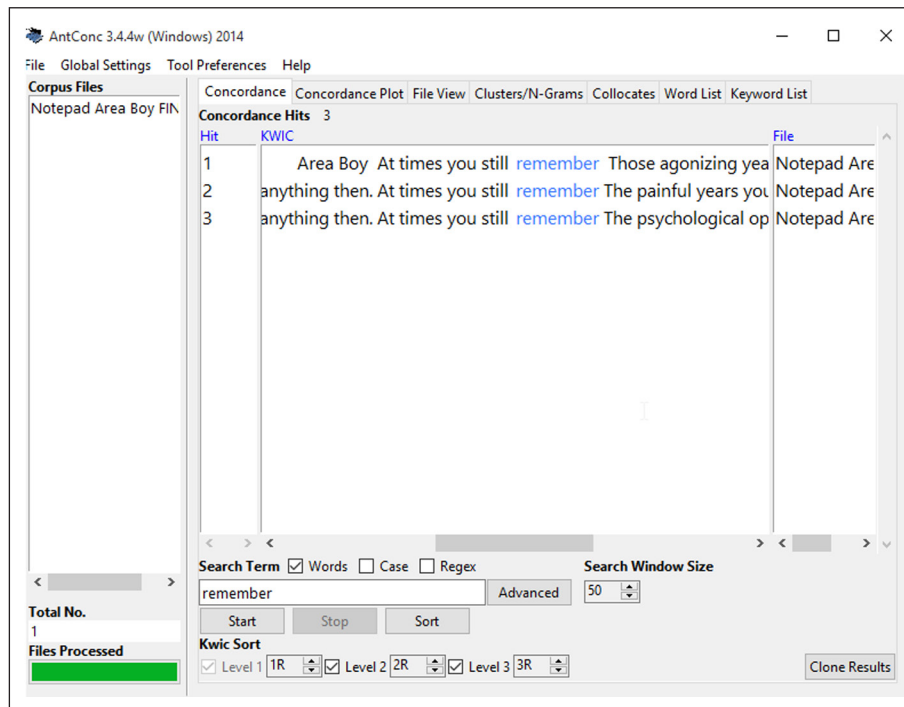


Figure 7: A sample screen of *AntConc*.

Details about *AntConc* are in Anthony (2018). That exercise was conducted to ensure the recurrence accuracy of the texts. Besides, *AntConc* supported the investigation by harvesting the frequency of other linguistic elements such as *at times*, *you*, *your*, and *nobody*.

Thereafter, the researcher utilized the Microsoft Excel Worksheet (e.g. **Figure 8**, as publicized latter) to further support SFL to process the clauses in “Area Boy.” The use of the Excel Worksheet became a fundamental tool in order to achieve accurate classifications of the structures that the *metafunctional* components have realized. As *AntConc* does not have the capacity for systemic appreciations, manual counting of the grammatical constituents in the semiotic slots has become inevitable. To this end, quantitative operations, following Jockers and Underwood (2016), Drucker (2016), and Dalamu (2017i), allow tables to compute the grammatical elements in the semiotic slots into appropriate values. Each table further schematizes into a simple graph for prompt examination of the operational facilities of the systemic elements. The scientific interpretation can

assist the reader for easy accessibility of the functional domains of the poem. The graphs of the mood, thematic, and transitivity systems expressed in **Figure 14**, later below, are cumulated into a single piece to reveal the relationships of the three metafunctions.

Procedure

The analytical as well as reading processes in **Figures 9 to 14**, as later illustrated below, inform the patterns of the discussion. However, the discussion gives preferences to the transitivity system because the grammatical term provides expressions for the contents of the clause. Besides, as the transitivity shows concern for the narrator's experience (inner and outer), the terminology also communicates universal relations of subcomponents of logical items (Butler 1985; Olivares 2013).

Data presentation

The items, below, are the data of "Area Boy", written in paragraphs and poetic lines.

Area Boy

///At times you still remember
Those agonizing years// you spent
As a cheap labourer in the General's farm
Tilling, toiling and sweating in the sun
For the pittance//they flung at you once in a month//
Yet nobody said anything then.//

///At times you still remember
The painful years//you spent
As a reluctant houseboy in Ikoyi//
Oga's callousness still haunts your steps//
Madam's overbearing attitude you cannot forget//
Yet nobody said anything then.///

///At times you still remember
The psychological oppression
Of watching their scions spray dollars in parties
Of their limousines splashing water on you in the streets
Of your wondering//where you went wrong//
//Yet nobody said anything then.//
Now that something in you has snapped//
Now that you can no longer stomach it//
Now that you're fighting back in the streets//
//Lashing out at the system//

///Stinging the molochs//who operate it//
And cowards who tolerate it//
It is time for them to call you names:
Tout! Vagrant! Vandal! Area boy!///

///Brother, your being an Area Boy is now the issue//
Nobody will ever bother to excavate
The fossils of disenchantment
Buried deep down in your soul.//

Data analysis

Figures 8, 9, and 10, below, display the application of mood, thematic, and transitivity systems to the poem, "Area Boy."

The investigation further exhibits the frequencies of the grammatical constituents of "Area Boy", based on SFL's applications in **Figures 8, 9, and 10**, below, in tables and graphs as expressed in the result section.

Results

Mood system of the "Area Boy" analysis

Table 3, below, displays the values of the semiotic slots in the "Area Boy" mood analysis in **Figure 8**, below.

Table 3: "Area Boy" mood system recurring value.

Semiotic Slot	Clause																					Total
	CL1	CL2	CL3	CL4	CL5	CL6	CL7	CL8	CL9	CL10	CL11	CL12	CL13	CL14	CL15	CL16	CL17	CL18	CL19	CL20	CL21	
S	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	19
F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	19
P	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	19
C	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	16
A	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	0	1	5	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	27

CL1	At times	you	still	remember		those agonising years
	A	S	Mod Adj	F:present	P:remember	C
	Residue	Mood			Residue	
CL2	You	spent		as a cheap labourer		in the General's farm, tilling, toiling and sweating in the sun for the pittance
	S	F:past	P:spend	A		A
	Mood		Residue			
CL3	They	flung		at you		once a month
	S	F:past	P:fling	A		A
	Mood		Residue			
CL4	Yet	nobody	said			anything
	A	S	F:past	P:say		C
	Residue	Mood		Residue		
CL5	At times	you	still	remember		the painful years
	A	S	Mod Adj	F:present	P:remember	C
	Residue	Mood			Residue	
CL6	You	spent		as a reluctant houseboy		in Ikoyi
	S	F:past	P:spend	A		A
	Mood		Residue			
CL7	Oga's callousness		haunts			your steps
	S		F:present	P:haunt		C
	Mood			Residue		
CL8	Madam overbearing attitude	you		can no longer		forget
	S			F:present		P: forget
	Mood					Residue
CL9	Yet	nobody	said			anything
	A	S	F:past	P:say		C
	Residue	Mood		Residue		
CL10	At times	you	still	remember		the psych- ological oppression of watching their scions spraying dollars in parties of their limousines splashing water on you in the streets of your wondering
	A	S	Mod Adj	F: present	P: remem- ber	C A x 4
	Residue	Mood		Residue		
CL11	Yet	nobody	said			anything
	A	S	F:past	P:say		C
	Residue	Mood		Residue		
CL12	Now	that	something in you	has		snapped
	A		S	F		P
	Residue		Mood			Residue
CL13	Now	that	you	can no longer		stomach it
	A		S	F		P
	Residue		Mood			Residue
CL14	Now	that	you	're		fighting back in the streets
	A		S	F		P
	Residue		Mood			Residue
CL15	Lashing out at	the system		CL16	Stinging	the molochs
	P	C			P	C
	Residue				Residue	
CL17	Who	operate				it
	S	F:present	P:operate			C
	Mood		Residue			
CL18	and	cowards who	tolerate			it
	S		F:present	P:tolerate		C
	Mood			Residue		
CL19	It	is	time for them			to call you names: Tout! Vagrant! Vandal! Area Boy
	S	F	C			A
	Mood		Residue			
CL20	Brother, your being an Area Boy		is	now		the issue
	S		F	Mod Adj		C
	Mood			Residue		
CL21	Nobody	will ever	bother to excavate			the fossils of disenchantment buried buried down in your soul
	S	F	P			C
	Mood		Residue			A

Figure 8: "Area Boy" mood analysis.

CL1	At times	you	still remember those agonising years	
	Theme1	Theme2	Rheme	
CL2	You	spent as a cheap labourer in the General's farm, tilling, toiling and sweating in the sun for the pittance		
	Theme	Rheme		
CL3	They	flung at you once a month		CL4
	Theme	Rheme		Yet
				nobody
				said anything
				Theme1
				Theme2
				Rheme
CL5	At times	you	still remember the painful years	
	Theme1	Theme2	Rheme	
CL6	You	spent as a reluctant houseboy in Ikoyi		
	Theme	Rheme		
CL7	Oga's callousness	haunts your steps		
	Theme	Rheme		
CL8	Madam overbearing attitude	you	can no longer forget	
	Theme1	Theme2	Rheme	
CL9	Yet	nobody	said anything	
	Theme1	Theme2	Rheme	
CL10	At times	you	still remember the psychological oppression of watching their scions spraying dollars in parties of their limousines splashing water on on you in the streets of your wondering	
	Theme1	Theme2	Rheme	
CL11	Yet	nobody	said anything	
	Theme1	Theme2	Rheme	
CL12	Now	that	something in you	has snapped
	Theme1	Theme2	Theme3	Rheme
CL13	Now	that	you	can no longer stomach it
	Theme1	Theme2	Theme3	Rheme
CL14	Now	that	you	're fighting back in the streets
	Theme1	Theme2	Theme3	Rheme
CL15	Lashing out at the system		CL16	
	Rheme		Stinging the molochs	
			Rheme	
CL17	Who	operate it		CL18
	Theme	Rheme		and
				cowards
				who
				tolerate it
				Theme1
				Theme2
				Them3
				Rheme
CL19	It	is time for them to call you names: Tout! Vagrant! Vandal! Area Boy		
	Theme	Rheme		
CL20	Brother,	your being an Area Boy		is now the issue
	Theme1	Theme2		Rheme
CL21	Nobody	will ever bother to evacuate the fossils of disenchantment buried down in your soul		
	Theme	Rheme		

Figure 9: "Area Boy" thematic analysis.

CL1	At times	you	still	remember	those agonising years	
	Circ:Location	Senser	Circ:Loc.	Pro:Mental	Phenomenon	
CL2	You	spent	as a cheap labourer	in the General's farm, tilling, toiling and sweating in the sun for the pittance		
	Actor	Pro:Material	Circ:Manner	Circ:Location		
CL3	They	flung at	you	once a month		
	Actor	Pro:Material	Goal	Circ:Location		
CL4	Yet	nobody	said	anything		
	Sayer	Pro:Verbal				
CL5	At times	you	still	remember	the painful years	
	Circ:Location	Senser	circ:Location	Pro:Mental	Phenomenon	
CL6	You	spent	as a reluctant houseboy	in Ikoji		
	Actor	Pro:Material	Circ:Manner	Circ:Location		
CL7	Oga's callousness	haunts	your steps			
	Actor	Pro:Material	Goal			
CL8	Madam overbearing attitude	you	can no longer forget			
		Senser	Pro:Mental			
CL9	Yet	nobody	said	anything		
	Sayer	Pro:Verbal				
CL10	At times	you	still	remember	the psychological oppression	of watching their scions spraying dollars in parties of their limousines splashing water on you in the streets of your wondering
	Circ:Location	Senser	Circ:Location	Pro:Mental	Phenomenon	Circ:Manner x 3; Circ:Location
CL11	Yet	nobody	said	anything		
	Sayer	Pro:Verbal				
CL12	Now	that	something in you	has snapped		
	Circ:Location		Actor	Pro:Material		
CL13	Now	that	you	can no longer stomach	it	
	Circ:Location		Senser	Pro:Mental	Phenomenon	
CL14	Now	that	you	're fighting back	in the streets	
	Circ:Location		Actor	Pro:Material	Circ:Location	
CL15	Lashing out at	the system		CL16	Stinging	the molochs
	Pro:Behavioral	Range			Pro:Material	Goal
CL17	Who	operate	it			
	Actor	Pro:Material	Goal			
CL18	and	cowards	who	tolerate	it	
		Behaver		Pro:Behavioral	Range	
CL19	It	is	time for them	to call you names: Tout! Vagrant! Vandal! Area Boy		
	Carrier	Pro:Relational, Attributive	Attribute	Circ:Role		
CL20	Brother, your being an Area Boy	is	now	the issue		
	Value		Pro:Relational, Ident.	Circ:Location	Token	
CL21	Nobody	will ever bother to evacuate	the fossils of disenchantment buried down in your soul			
	Actor	Pro:Material	Goal			

Figure 10: "Area Boy" transitivity analysis.

Figure 11, below, is the cumulative of the values computed in the mood system in **Table 3**, above.

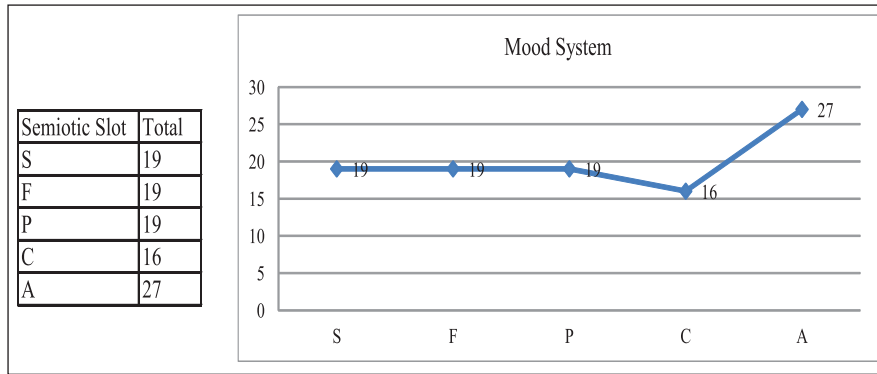


Figure 11: “Area Boy” mood system calibration.

Figure 11, above, indicates Adjunct as the priority because it is more functional in the “Area Boy” text. Subject, Finite, and Predicator are next with Complement being the less functional device. The figure shows that the text is constructed in declarative clauses, issuing statements to the target audience in order to show the feelings of the speaker.

Thematic system of the “Area Boy” analysis

Table 4, below, reveals the values of the semiotic slots in the “Area Boy” thematic analysis in **Figure 9**, as shown earlier, above.

Figure 12, below, is the cumulative of the values specified in the thematic system in **Table 4**, below.

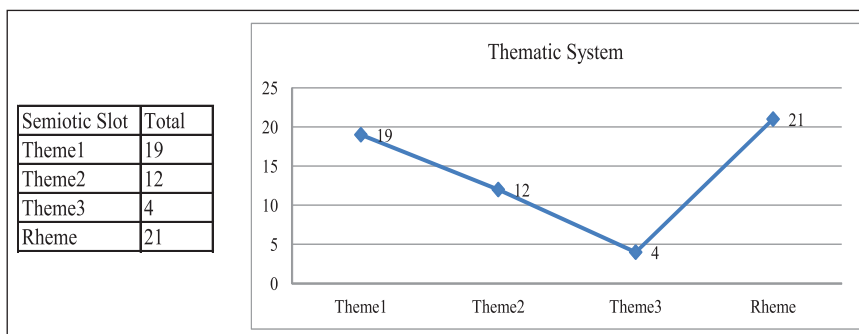


Figure 12: “Area Boy” thematic system calibration.

Rheme is the most prominent in **Figure 12**, above. This is the core of the message of the “Area Boy.” Besides, Theme 1 recurs in almost all the clauses. This signals that the organizations of the clauses are hardly elliptical. The structures are complete statements that sometimes have Theme 2 as a support for the clauses points of departure. Theme 3 is available only in clauses 12, 13, 14, and 18. That points out the rarity of Theme 3 in the textual operations.

Transitivity system of the “Area Boy” analysis

Table 5, below, shows the values of the semiotic slots in the “Area Boy” transitivity analysis in **Figure 10**, above.

Figure 13, below, is the cumulative of the values manifested in the thematic system in **Table 5**, below.

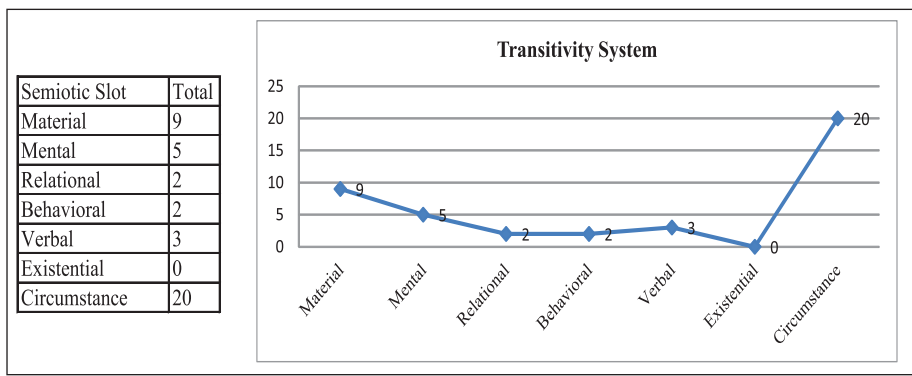


Figure 13: “Area Boy” transitivity calibration.

Material processes record the highest value in **Figure 13**, above. This is in alignment with the claim of Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) that material processes are the most deployed in language usages. Apart from mental processes that operate at the frequency of five, other processes such as relational and behavioral operate at the minimal levels of two points each. It is surprising that verbal processes function in a relatively similar category with other processes with three points. This act seems to happen because the narrator makes a sort of reported speeches from time to time.

Table 5: “Area Boy” transitivity system calibration.

Semiotic Slot	Clause																				Total		
	CL1	CL2	CL3	CL4	CL5	CL6	CL7	CL8	CL9	CL10	CL11	CL12	CL13	CL14	CL15	CL16	CL17	CL18	CL19	CL20		CL21	
Material	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	9
Mental	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Relational	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Behavioral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Verbal	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Existential	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Circumstance	2	2	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	5	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	20

Three metafunctions of the “Area Boy” analysis

Figure 14, below, is the cumulative of the values, exhibited in the mood, thematic, and transitivity systems, as displayed earlier in **Figures 8, 9, and 10**, above.

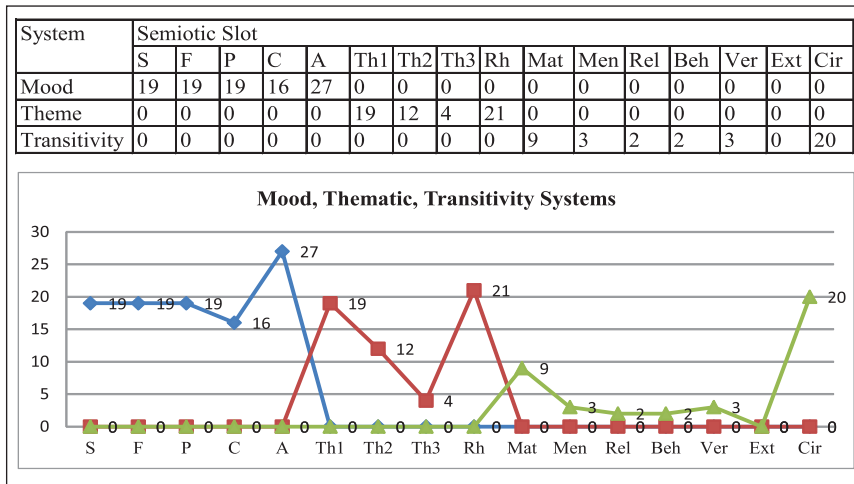


Figure 14: “Area Boy” metafunctions’ relationship calibration.

Figure 14, above, demonstrates the Adjunct of the mood system, rheme of the thematic system, and material processes of the transitivity system as the highest in functional values, as followed by mental processes. By implication, SFL illustrates Adjunct, rheme, and material processes, as the strongest areas of domination of the “Area Boy” text. These are followed by Subject, Finite, and Predicator of the mood system, and Theme 1 of the thematic system. The computing outcomes of SFL of “Area Boy” indicate analytical skills that can augment cross-fertilization of ideas in disciplines. The graphical appearances of textual elements create a sort of communicative interaction for the audience in an easy way.

Discussion

There are five stanzas in the poem of “Area Boy.” The segments explain the concern of the narrator about an “Area Boy” named George in the epigraph not actually integral to the stanzas. It is striking to read from the epitaph that the poem is *for George, the “Area Boy”, who opened up a bitter heart to me at Ojuelegba, Lagos*. This

revelation specifies the source of the poet's influence as well as the focus. *Ojuelegba* is an important part of Yaba, Lagos (not far away from the renowned University of Lagos), where influential and highly respected people live. As a heartbeat of Yaba, the mentioning of *Ojuelegba* anywhere in Nigeria signifies something remarkably-different. It is a signpost to a very small portion of land with a flyover. Underneath the flyover are motor parks, petty trading activities, and prostitutes. On top of these, *Ojuelegba* is a domain for miscreants for twenty-four hours a day. In all these, *Ojuelegba* points to a place where prostitutes transact businesses. However, the Governor of Lagos State between 2007–2015, Babatunde Raji Fashola, cleansed *Ojuelegba* of prostitutes and miscreants. Fashola positioned the place as a worthwhile environment during his reign and that drive has been sustained till today. Fashola is now the Minister of Power, Works, and Housing in the current Buhari's Administration. Despite the thorough cleansing, the negative nuances attached to *Ojuelegba* have become very difficult to remove from the people's mindsets. The displacement of the "Area Boy" from *Ojuelegba* might have given rise to the heart rendering poem of "Area Boy."

The author approaches the discussion from the broad views of the systemic organization of the clauses in the stanzas, and semantic values attached to the clauses most especially from the *goings-on*. The poem opens up with a circumstantial element of place, *At times*, to indicate a consistent feeling of the "Area Boy" concerning the issues of life that he has undergone. This is expressed through a mental process, *remember*. *Remember* illustrates the trauma in the cognitive capacity of the "Area Boy." The recurrence of *you* projects the poet as a voice for the "Area Boy" because the Actor, *you*, refers to what has happened to an individual, as the experience of the past that connects the "Area Boy's" present condition. In every stanza, except in the fifth, *you* functions, at least, three times consecutively. The applications of Actor, *you*, present the poem more as containing declarative clauses. As statements, Subjects and Finites operate well in propagating the interactive nature on the clauses (Thompson 2004). All the clauses are declarative except CL15 and CL16 that are punctuated. Apart from CL1 that the Subject, *You*, takes the Finite, *remember*, in the

present tense, the Subjects *You*, *They*, and *nobody* in CL2, CL3, and CL4 present their Subjects, *spent*, *flung*, and *said* in the past. Out of the past elements, *spend*, *fling*, and *say* are systemically-deduced as predicators. This operation reveals SFL as a viable tool of separating a fused verbal group structure into two systemic distinct forms that function in the domains of Finite and Predicator (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Dalamu 2017b).

For the Participant, *Those agonizing years*, analyzed earlier as Phenomenon, in **Figure 10**, CL1, is a painful expression that demonstrates how the “Area Boy” has been subjected to the modern day slavery *in the General’s farm*, where the individual works and receives a meager salary. The circumstantial communicative device, *in the General’s farm*, seems to refer to “an individual who was an Army General” and after the service years retired to establish a farm to generate money. In that course, the “Area Boy” becomes a useful-cum-precious tool in the farm. This is because an average Nigerian graduate detests tilling the land. Most elites are in search of and doing white-collar-jobs. Perhaps, that attitude has contributed to the importation of food from most parts of the world to the country. Even those that read Agricultural (related) Sciences in Universities may not be ready to practice farming either as relating to livestock or crop productions. It is in that light that the “Area Boy” becomes a resourceful personality for the General, as expressed in CL2. That exploitation encourages the speaker to conclude that *Yet nobody said anything then*. The clause with a verbal process indicts every onlooker at the manhandling of the “Area Boy.” The poet expects that all the concerned should have raised their voices concerning the abuse of the rights of the “Area Boy” *in the General’s farm*. Individuals have all been recalcitrant simply because the “Area Boy” is not a family member of successful persons. Such unwillingness reveals the nature of relationship between the rich and the poor. The people have forgotten that the “Area Boy” is a member of the Nigerian society who has the right equivalent to the General’s. The adjunct, *then*, serves a purpose of reminding the society of the situation of the “Area Boy” when he needs helps and nobody is observant of his plight. *Then* links the past agony of the “Area Boy” to his present status of being a vagabond. The structure below shows the thematic functions of the stanza one.

Textual Organization	}	CL1 =	Theme1 + Theme2 + Rheme
		CL2 =	Theme + Rheme
		CL3 =	Theme + Rheme
		CL4 =	Theme1 + Theme2 + Rheme

The point of departure of CL1 and CL4 is the same as having two themes; whereas CL2 and CL3 elements have one theme each.

The second stanza is comparatively-parallel to the first stanza because it begins with a flashback into the past, remembering *the painful years ... spent as a houseboy in Ikoyi*. The “Area Boy” is connected to *Ojuelegba*, while the master lives in *Ikoyi*. The implication is that *Ikoyi* is in the Lagos Island, while *Ojuelegba* is in the mainland, representing two different worlds or perspectives. Foreigners and well-meaning Nigerians reside in *Ikoyi*. This can indicate that if the “Area Boy” will have an access at all to *Ikoyi*, it can only be made possible through rendering services to the master. The poet constructs one domain for the poor and the other for the affluent. The “Area Boy” is neither a foolish person nor a senseless individual. It is that he needs helps from the society and no one appreciates his humble cries to assist the helpless human being. Such supports, if rendered, could give the individual breakthroughs in order to showcase his talents and skills in resourceful ways. The mood system in stanza two is similar in structure to stanza one. The study locates the differences in CL7 and CL8 where the Subjects, *Oga’s callousness* and *Madam’s overbearing attitude/you*, attract different Finites. The two Finites, *haunt* and *can no longer*, operate in present forms. It is salient to have *no longer* in the verbal group. It is a negative polarity that compels the boy to continue to flashback to his experience with the wife of his master. That is, the *Madam’s* imperious characteristic.

The Participant, *The painful year* and circumstantial element, *as a reluctant houseboy* support the remark on *Madam’s* dictatorial capacity. The “Area Boy” understands that he passes through pains in the master’s house, nonetheless, because there is no one to help, the indigent resigns himself to fate. According to the narrator, the “Area Boy” discharges his responsibilities sluggishly. The houseboy’s experience sensitizes the readers in two forms. The master’s characteristic, expressed as *Oga’s callousness*, and the madam’s attitude describes, as *Madam’s overbearing*

attitude. The *Oga* (i.e. master) is emotionally-hardened. That heartlessness has made the boss to be careless of the sufferings of the concerned, which has turned him to a restless individual. Perhaps, that has lead to the persistent complaints that the writer observes from the “poetic narrative.” The other approach is that the woman in the house does not help matters. *Madam* makes the situation possibly-worse. The madam’s domineering role overwhelms the “Area Boy” to be forcefully-dedicated to his responsibilities despite the initial reluctance. Indirectly, the destitute engages in a sort of forced labor in the house of the rich and, probably, in the presence of the children *Yet nobody said anything then*. It is painful that nobody comes to his aid, being a reason for the lamentation. The structure below illustrates the thematic organization of stanza two.

Textual Organization	{	CL5 =	Theme1 + Theme2 + Rheme
		CL6 =	Theme + Rheme
		CL7 =	Theme + Rheme
		CL8 =	Theme1 + Theme2 + Rheme
		CL9 =	Theme1 + Theme2 + Rheme

CL5, CL8, and CL9 portray similar thematic choices of dual theme operations; whereas CL6 and CL7 organize single theme each.

The third outpouring of a hurting heart shows in a psychological form in the third stanza. The poet calls that *The psychological oppression*, which is Phenomenon to the mental process, *remember*. The first concern positions the “Area Boy”, as a laborer in the farm. The second challenge is the nagging of the master and wife on the houseboy. The experience here plays out as a kind of feeling and not an exercise of personal strength in order to achieve a mission. One can argue that the concern of the “Area Boy”, this time, does not have a solid logical foundation. This is because the grievance is not objective. The circumstantial devices of *Of washing their scions spray dollars in parties/Of that limousines splashing water on you ...* are pains that fall into the terrain of personal feelings, expressed in the form of envy. The sentiments of jealousy classified as oppression can lead to perpetration of evil. Moreover, the resentment is a thought that has the potency to persuade the “Area Boy” to look for

money at all costs. In the same spirit of self-appraisal of sensationalism, the individual raises a complaint *Of your wondering where you went wrong*. Actually, it is a good thing to be comfortable in life. Nevertheless, developing a spirit of rivalry against someone's neighbor is not acceptable in all ramifications of social norms. The "Area Boy" has forgotten that fingers are not equal and can never be equal. The throbbing heart needs to transcend the mundane activities that he witnesses and complains of in diverse forms in order to focus on how to survive socially economically.

To fully register the grievance, four circumstantial facilities with the markers of *of* (three times), and *in* are employed. These demonstrate the degree of the "Area Boy's" annoyance against the family of his master. The longevity of the clause supports the claim above. As if that is not enough, the playing of a blame-game emanates to project the individual as someone, who has sometimes missed opportunities. Probably, that validation influences the speaker to begin to query where the "Area Boy" has gone wrong. In my argument, the "Area Boy" needs to dig deep in terms of his past, his parents, and perhaps personal disobedience to instructions from the guardian. The stubbornness, ignorance, and lackadaisical qualities of the complainant might have caused his present situation of indigence. The declarative, *Yet nobody said anything*, motivated with a verbal process, is striking. This is because the content recurs three times in stanzas, one, two, and three – CL4, CL9, and CL11. The implication of the repetitive statement is that it strongly expresses the wish of the "Area Boy."

The verbs "to be" and "to have" as well as the auxiliary "can no longer" exhibited in negative polarity occupy the Finite positions of CL14, CL12, and CL13. The other 'interacts' of the mood are repetitions of the Subjects discussed earlier in stanzas one and two. CL15 does not have mood at all but residue. The "tormented Area Boy", as a laborer, a houseboy, and a psychologically-oppressed individual, expects members of the Lagos community to provide him a succor from the anguish experienced. Before anyone casts blame on the Lagos society, it is important to point out that Lagos is a very busy city where the concept of individualism dominates virtually all activities (Gustavsson 2008). The blame must first go to the parents and second to

the government. If the parents have failed in their responsibilities of properly raising the child, the government is supposed to bear the burden of caring for the citizens, including the less privileged ones. Overwhelming responsibilities of other parents may have prevented them from taking care of the “Area Boy” and others in a similar condition. So, the plight of the boy is a lesson to all parents; people must give birth to only the children that they can cater for because *nobody will say anything* while their untrained children roam. Parents must wonder while their disobedient children wander. The structure below demonstrates the point of departure of the clauses in stanza three.

Textual Organization	{	CL10 =	Theme1 + Theme2 + Rheme
		CL11 =	Theme1 + Theme2 + Rheme
		CL12 =	Theme1 + Theme2 + Theme3 +Rheme
		CL13 =	Theme1 + Theme2 + Theme3 +Rheme
		CL14 =	Theme1 + Theme2 + Theme3 +Rheme
		CL15 =	∅ + Rheme

The organization of the clauses in stanza three reveals different communicative background, when one makes a dialectical appreciation with earlier dissected stanzas one and two. Three organizational structures unfold here. CL10 and CL11 have two themes each. CL12, CL13, and CL14 operate with three themes each whereas CL15 has neither the thematic system nor the mood system. The poet restricts the function of CL15 to rhematic elements, corresponding to the interpersonal devices of Predicator, *Lashing out at* and Complement, *the system*.

After the past that stanzas one, two, and three favor, the conformity of stanzas four and five operates in the present events. The narrator describes the phenomenon, using the circumstantial mechanism of *Now*, which refers to the engagement of time. One observes the emphasis of *Now* in clauses 12, 13, 14, and 20 as well. The past can be categorized as the premature stage, while the mature stage connotes the present. The past unveils the “Area Boy” as being in servitudes of influential people, who violate social standards to take advantage of the boy’s weakness and cheat him. The present displays the “Area Boy”, as an individual with freedom. Thus, he troubles the

society that, by the opinion of the boy, has not been kind to the sore-hearted person. Those who renege in ministering to the needy usually pay the astronomical price for their negligence. Perhaps, some people may not dream of evil perpetration; the circumstances surrounding them may incite their behaviors toward social vices. The "Area Boy" reveals that *Now that something in you has snapped*, one can retaliate, has a connection with the experience of the past. The author can recall the utilization of the mental process of *remember* in three different occasions in the verses. The lexeme, *remember*, is a pointer to how the servitude experience borders the painful-hearted fellow, and negatively influences his mental capabilities. The experience has made the boy so unpleasant to an extent of outpouring his annoyance to the audience. The gathered knowledge stimulates the boy to confess that one *can no longer stomach it*. It is a frame of mind expressed in the mental process of *can no longer stomach* that is very difficult to erase from one's cognitive storage. It is an indicator that those who are rich in the society must treat the poor fairly well; else as the time is fast approaching, in no time, the less privileged will fight back, and perhaps, be terroristic.

The poet takes cognizance of this, as commented that *Now that you're fighting back in the street ... stinging the molochs it is time to call you names: Tout! ...* The "Area Boy" understands the trouble that he causes the society. Besides, it is the society that labels him "Area Boy" and other synonymous appellations such as *tout*, *vagrant*, and *vandal*. The names seem to signify the punishment that the boy inflicts on the society. In a precise way, "Area Boys" are those irresponsible children most of them boys (because there are no "Area Girls" in Lagos), who pick pockets, steal, and later turn to armed robbers. Possibly, some socially affected individuals might not be armed robbers but beggars and miscreants, who wander to beseech people for money in order to sustain their lives under the bridge. It cannot be totally ruled out that one, who wanders, can turn to a thief because an aphorism stipulates that an idle hand is the devil's workshop.

There are four processes in stanza four. These are *stinging* (material), *operate* (material), *tolerate* (behavioral), and *is* (relational). *Sting* represents a poisonous spirit, while *operate* refers to the workable mechanism of the social system and structure.

Tolerate describes the attitude of the entire actors of society that accept the evil that the powerful perpetrate on the less privileged (see Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 179–238). At this juncture, the expectation of the narrator is that the society ought to intervene by protesting against *the General's* inhumanity, *Oga's callousness*, and *Madam's overbearing* qualities. Instead of necessary interpositions, the people seem to add to the traumatic experience of the boy. The poem draws on those behaviors to create a relational process as an attribute as well as a cursor to the current perspective of the society on the helpless individual, who has perhaps turned to a criminal. CL16 expresses the residue as Predicator, *stinging* and Complement, *the molochs*. The Subjects in CL17 and CL18 are relative markers, *who*, that attract different Finites of *operate* and *tolerate* in present tense respectively. CL19's Subject is *it*, which takes *is* as its Finite. The explanation below characterizes the thematic choices of stanza four.

Textual Organization	{	CL16 =	Ø + Rheme
		CL17 =	Theme + Rheme
		CL18 =	Theme1 + Theme2 + Theme3 + Rheme
		CL19 =	Theme + Rheme

The four clauses in stanza four appear in different parameters except that CL17 and CL19 have a similar pattern of theme/rheme structures. CL16 operates only in rheme with an empty set of theme. The stanza experiences a full-stretch of thematic configuration in CL18 with three themes at a go.

The poet fraternizes with the “Area Boy” by calling him *brother* as a point of departure of CL20. The association becomes a necessity because George, the “Area Boy” provides the poet pieces of information about the environment and personal feelings. The poem, “Area Boy”, seems to honor the citizens, who are victims of being miscreants; the poet is a probable voice for “Area Boys.” Besides, the poet, being an intellectual, subsumes himself into a similar situation in order to sensitize the government to rise to the plight of “Area Boys”, who cause headaches to the larger society. In respect of that, the poet perceives the challenge of the notion of “Area Boy”, as a concern that rocks the social boat of Lagos and Nigeria at large. Even if the government should rescue “Area Boys” after that they have been socially bartered;

what about the damages that the misfortune has created in their subconscious souls? The Subjects, *your being an Area Boy* and *Nobody* in CL20 and CL21 take on the Finites, *is* and *will ever* respectively to reflect the mood system of the interaction. The structure below indicates the themes of the stanza.

Textual	}	CL20 =	Theme1 + Theme2 + Rheme
Organization		CL21 =	Theme + Rheme

CL20 demonstrates a marked multiple structure of themes, while CL21 shows an unmarked thematic organ. The poet concludes with a declarative that *Nobody will ever bother to evacuate/The fossils of disenchantment/Buried deep down in your soul*. Perhaps, irrespective of the aids given to the “Area Boy” the past experience might prevent the agonized destitute from adopting the full status and responsibility of a good citizen. In that case, it becomes imprudent to allow citizens to degenerate in social treasures before the society rescues them from their plights. Such delay could be very extortionate in relation to loss of lives and property.

Conclusion

The study shows that SFL is an instrument of DH by allowing scientific facilities to process the structural values of the poem, as illustrated earlier in **Figures 8, 9, and 10**; **Tables 3, 4, and 5**; and **Figures 11, 12, 13, and 14**. The results of the analysis of the poem, “Area Boy”, in which SFL is applied display the tenor of discourse, as explicating the experience of the painful heart in declarative statements functioning with Subject and Finite. These semiotic values are highly supported with Adjuncts. The interactions reveal how the society creates bitterness in the soul of the “Area Boy.” The organization of the clauses operates on themes, which are sometimes marked multiple themes, as means of expressing the *markedness*. The mode of discourse exhibits meaning in the rhemes, which are in alignment with most processes. The experience that the text shares utilizes material processes of having and being (e.g. *spent, fighting back, lashing out at, stinging, and operate*) in order to explain the situation of the “Area Boy” in the past and in the present. The study also observes the field of discourse, oscillating between mental processes (e.g. *remember, can no*

longer forget, and *can no longer stomach*) and verbal processes (e.g. *said*). These are indicators of the traumatic experience of the painful soul and his expectation from the society. Examining the poem from the transitivity systemic approach, the author observes some repetitive devices from the investigation. There are about five of the communicative facilities that function as processes, circumstances, and full-fledged clauses. These are: *At times you still remember* (declarative clause); *Yet nobody said anything* (declarative clause); *spent* (material process); *Now* (circumstantial element of time); and *Of* (circumstantial element of manner).

There are two divisions in the poem, that is, the environment of the past and that of the present. The past experience displays accumulated thoughts of the “Area Boy” as a laborer as well as a houseboy. Apart from that, personal feelings, crowded with sentiments, disturb the victim. The later can be accepted as the fault of the society. However, one is also compelled to indict the boy, and to negate his grievances. The boy does not need to blame others for his shortcomings, failings, and challenges. Instead of groaning, the individual ought to chart a new course of survival in a legally-acceptable way. The envy of the master’s family berates social norms. Nevertheless, the present, the poet alerts, is a *fighting back* – a time of retaliation. This represents a period when the concerned individual feels being frustrated by the society. The disappointment might have permitted the “Area Boy” to become a burden to the society because the government has somehow abdicated its social responsibility of caring for its own. That is, all citizens. The selfishness of the society contributes as well to make a nuisance out of the helpless individual. Instead of assisting the “Area Boy” in order to have access to good things of life, the penniless is taken advantage of in order to slavishly serve the haughty.

From a theoretical perspective, the study suggests that SFL has the potency to provide socio-cultural meaning potential to texts in their literary forms. It also deduces from “Area Boy” that the government and private individuals should endeavor to consider the less privileged, which have equal rights to survive as citizens of the nation. Apart from the corpus that can be achieved, SFL textual interpretations have the capacity to stimulate computer experts to construct simulations of poetic devices that the audience can easily observe from computers. It is the hope of the study that

researchers will make use of SFL conceptual frameworks to analyze literature for desired meaning potential.

Furthermore and in retrospect, the constraints experienced in the manual counting of the systemic constituents of “Area Boy” inspires the following suggestions. To the best of my knowledge, some of the available software assisting in DH (e.g. *AntConc*) could not vividly cater for systemic appreciations of texts. On that ground, one could recommend the need for computer experts (or programmers) to produce some software that can take care of SFL analyses and positions on lexemic investigations. Such technological facility must have the potency to identify and compute a corpus of systemic processes, circumstantial devices, continuatives, vocatives, etc. of their kinds. If a project of this magnitude, involving systemicists and software experts, is conducted; one is seemingly sure that such cross-fertilization of ideas will yield some merits. First, the software will eradicate the manual counting, as done in this paper, to automation of systemic accountability of communicative facilities either in Microsoft Excel Sheet or Microsoft Word or any other computerization concepts. Second, it might attract researchers to participate in the development of SFL for the betterment of the humanity at large. Third, the software could promote SFL as learner- and user-friendly. Fourth, it can aid easy generation of meaning potential of texts to reveal “what a composer of a text means” structurally and contextually.

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