

Exploring the African history through literature: A transitivity analysis of Chinua Achebe's *things fall apart*

Issa DJIMET^{1,*} and ANDJAFFA DJALDI Simon²

¹ English Department, University of Doba, Chad.

² Department of French Language and Literature, University of N'Djamena, Chad.

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Abstract

This work is chiefly concerned with the Transitivity analysis of two selected extracts from *Things Fall Apart* authored by the famous Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. These extracts have been qualitatively singled out from the novel, and the Transitivity theory has been applied to them in order to highlight the various process types and the main participants. Actually, the analysis of the linguistic data has been carried out both on the qualitative and the quantitative bases. In Extract 1 the results reveal that the main experiences in terms of doings, happenings, beings and havings are ascribed to Okonkwo who embodies, to some extent, the best cultural values of the Igbo society while his father Unoka is attributed experiences which represent the less attractive facets of the same values. The analysis of Extract 2 uncovers a different meaning; it emphasizes the principal sayers, actors, sensors, carriers who are the colonial administrators on the one hand, and the people of Umuofia and the Ekwugwus on the other hand. Indeed, the extract describes the deconstruction of the Igbo people ancestral values by the colonizers while the people of Umuofia try to preserve their culture in vain. Thus, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* does not only demonstrate the African societies historicity, but it also reminds Africans on how their values were methodologically destroyed and replaced by Western values.

Keywords: Transitivity theory; Ancestral values; Things Fall Apart; Deconstruction; Historicity

1. Introduction

European colonizers described Africa as the continent of savage people in order to justify colonization. They needed to argue that colonization was an absolute necessity, for Africans are animals without any culture or civilization. Colonization was actually viewed as a moral duty towards African peoples. Writers such as the German philosopher, G. W. F. Hegel and the British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper pretended that Africans had no history before the advent of Europeans on the continent in the fifteenth century (Bob-Milliar, 2021). Consequently, they referred to Africa as the "dark continent". It was in the interest of colonizers to prevent Africans from knowing their true history. Actually, Africa was not part of the project of the agreement on using documents as major sources in historical writing while this allowed to preserve European past experiences (Mikidady, 2021). Behind this denial of the historicity of African societies is also the idea that Africa had no civilization, the word 'civilization' being used to measure a community's level of scientific and technological innovations and inventions. But there are more and more scientific proofs of the historicity of African societies. Mikidady (2021) affirms that the tradition of writing is early to colonialism in East Africa. This work is about the systemic functional linguistic analysis of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, which describes African history better than any other documents.

In fact, Achebe is rightly considered as one of Africa's famous writers, and it is his novel *Things Fall Apart* which earned him this rank. Therefore, this novel has received a lot of attention on the part of researchers. Analyzing the novel from

* Corresponding author: Issa DJIMET.

a stylistic perspective, Betu (2023) contends that it describes the clash of cultures and the brutal changes in life and values caused by the outset of British colonization in Nigeria at the end of the nineteenth century. Put another way, the writer's aim is to teach Africans this painful section of their history. This is achieved through the various experiences detailed in the novel. Moreover, Chen (2023) does an interesting analysis of *Things Fall Apart* and concludes that the Igbo culture is not retarded, but it has a lot of resemblances with the 'civilized' western societies. African people had very complex cultural practices related to marriage, justice, politics, etc. Similarly, in describing the pre and postcolonial Igbo society in Achebe's novel, Kenalemang (2013) comes up with the reflection that *Things Fall Apart* was written in response to European novels that presented Africans as savages who needed to be enlightened by Europeans. However, he does not depict a perfect Igbo society, but a society with strengths and imperfections just like all societies.

This work does not aim at making a totally different reflection, but rather it suggests a Transitivity analysis (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), on the basis of the hypothesis that things continue to fall apart in contemporary Africa confronted with enormous cultural, economic and political challenges. The article particularly puts the accent on the different types of processes and their corresponding constituents so as to emphasize the salient experiences described by the author of the novel *Things Fall Apart*, which might be used as benchmarks for the examination of contemporary African problems.

1.1. Theoretical Background

1.1.1. The Grammar of Experiential: Transitivity

The grammar of experiential meaning is related upwards to the register variable of field and downwards, at the lexicogrammatical level, to Transitivity. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) argue that Transitivity is about the organization of the clause to realize ideational meanings, which have two components: the experiential meaning and the logical meanings between clauses in clause complexes. The transitivity system divides human experiences into manageable set of process types, which consists of a flow of events or goings-on. This is basically about inner and outer experiences, that is, what is going on out there, in the world around us, and what is going on inside ourselves, in the world of consciousness. These two aspects of human experiences are actualized through six process types (Halliday et al., 2004): material, behavioral, mental, verbal, relational and existential. Therefore, doing a Transitivity analysis of a text means identifying the different process types and their related participants and circumstances. Here, the clause is analyzed as a representation of human experience.

Human experience also consists of participants and (optionally) of circumstantial elements. Participants are directly related to the process. Either they cause the occurrence of the process or they are affected by it in some way (Eggins, 1994). Participants are represented by nominal groups. As for circumstantial elements, they contribute in the construction of human experience by specifying the circumstances and facts that are connected with the processes. Circumstances are realized by prepositional or adverbial phrases.

2. Methods

The method adopted for the analysis of the texts or extracts is the mixed method, which combines both quantitative and qualitative data (American Psychological Association, 2020; & Creswell, 2015). Indeed, the paper uses the deductive reasoning (quantitative method), starting from general to particular on the one hand, and on the other hand it applies the inductive approach (qualitative method), proceeding from limited facts or observation to a general conclusion. Thus, the analysis of the process types and their distribution among the participants are done quantitatively whereas the interpretation of the findings is carried out on both the quantitative and the qualitative bases. Actually, two extracts of four pages each (font 10) are selected qualitatively from Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, considering their relevance in terms of the involvement of the main character or characters in them, and these are split into analyzable linguistic units called clauses in which the process types are identified quantitatively. Moreover, the distributions of the process types among the participants are meticulously provided so as to facilitate the analysis of the extracts.

3. Results

3.1. Quantitative Transitivity Analysis of Extract 1

This section is about the quantitative Transitivity analysis of Extract 1. Particularly, it is concerned with the description of the six process types, as it is emphasized in the section about theory.

Table 1 below synthesizes the occurrence of the different process types in extract 1

Table 1 process types occurrence

Process types	Number	Percentage
IMP	137	29.33%
TMP	101	21.62%
EP	5	1.07%
RP	105	22.48%
MeP	59	12.63%
VP	50	10.70%
BeP	10	2.14%
Total	467	100%

The above table uncovers that extract 1 contains 467 clauses the majority of which realizes an important number of actions through IMPs (137 out of 467, corresponding to 29.33%) on the one hand, and through TMPs (101 out 467, representing 21.62%) on the other hand. The analysis also highlights a significant occurrence of RPs (105 out 467, that is, 22.48%), meaning that there a lot of descriptions in the extract under analysis. The inner description is actualized via MePs, which occur 59/467 times, with a percentage of 12.63%. Also, a substantial number of experiences are simply verbalized (50 out of 467, with a percentage of 10.70%) whereas Behavioral Processes and existential ones are rare (10 out 467 BePs and 5 out of 467 EPs, that is, 2.14% and 1.07% respectively). The existence of some facts or realities clarifies the inner and the outer experiences.

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of IMPs among participants.

Table 2 distribution of Intransitive Material Processes among participants

Actors	Process number	Total
His fame (Okonkwo); Every nerve and every muscle, he; his whole life; Okonkwo's fear; the stranger;	002; 017; 028; 036; 227; 244; 288; 292; 366; 367; 368; 387; 391; 393; 394; 405; 410; 420; 434; 438; 447; 448; 464;	23
who for seven years (Amalinze); his back;	005; 007;	2
The drums	012;	1
the flutes; it;	013; 151;	2
Any money; it	044; 045;	2
They (Unoka's band and their dancing <i>egwuQwu</i>); he (Unoka); his face, his voice; tears; I;	069; 071; 088; 090; 101; 103; 107; 109; 114; 115; 139; 144; 146; 182; 187; 188; 201; 208;	18
the rains;	074;	1
the first kites;	085;	1
He (Okoye); I;	112; 156; 164; 167; 170; 181; 221;	7
They (Unoka and Okoye)	135;	1
the art of conversation;	173;	1
Words;	175;	1
the far wall of his hut; it;	194; 195;	2
Each group there (a pinch of snuff);	205; 219;	2
He (that man);	209;	1

on those;	214;	1
A man	226	1
Age	237	1
achievement	238	1
He (a child)	242	1
the doomed lad	247	1
It(the crier's voice)	263; 272	2
Children	267	1
Silence	273; 274	2
those not so young (The happy voices of children)	277;	1
the moon	280	1
the cripple	281	1
That (war with a neighboring clan)	285;	1
Ogbuefi Ezeugo;he; one; I;	296; 297; 298; 302; 309; 310; 312; 314; 321; 328; 329;	11
his cloth (Ogbuefi Ezeugo)	308;	1
the anger on his face (Ogbuefi Ezeugo);	322;	1
a sort of smile;	323;	1
their daughter;	325; 326;	2
It;	333;	2
THE CROWD;	334; 331	1
Anybody;	347;	1
the neighbouring clans;	351; 352; 353; 354;	4
its case;	356;	1
they(Umuofia);	360;	1
<i>U/adi-nwayi</i> ;	361;	1
the war;	363;	1
The elders, or <i>ndichie</i> ; they;	371; 373; 375	3
the girl;	376; 377;	2
He (Ikemefuna);	378;	1
no hurry	379;	1
Ikemefuna; He;	382; 437; 441; 444; 454; 460;	6
It(<i>acfbala</i>);	403;	1
the chickens;	411;	1
They (his wives and young children)	415; 416;	2
Nwoye	421;	1
a large compound;	424;	1
His own hut, or <i>obi</i> ;	425;	1
Hut;	427;	1

The barn;	428;	1
long stacks of yam;	429;	1
each wife;	431;	1
the daughter of Umuofia;	436;	1
You (Okonkwo's senior wife);	449;	1
his father (Ikemefuna's)	456;	1
a few men;	458;	1
His mother (Ikemefuna's);	462;	1
Total		137

Table 2 gives statistic details about the distribution of IMPs among the participants. It is worth noting that the analysis is essentially focused on some preeminent participants. The table reveals that the majority of the IMPs is realized by Okonkwo. Indeed, he is the actor of 23 IMPs out of 137, corresponding to 16.78%. This emphasizes the contrast between Unoka and his son Okonkwo who is the symbol of courage, bravery and success. Okonkwo is involved in important actions which have contributed to his fame in Umuofia. As for Unoka, he is the participant in 18/137 IMPs, representing 13.13%. These basically highlight Unoka and his band's somehow useless activities or occupations. They spend their times playing music, which is not actually valorized in the Igbo society. Moreover, 11 out 137 (8.02%) IMPs are attributed to *Ogbuefi Ezeugo*, describing the cultural and democratic actions which must be taken in a context of an eventual conflict between the two villages: Umuofia and Mbaino. The analysis also reveals that 7 IMPs out of 137 (5.10%) are ascribed to *Okoye*, whose actions clarify some social and concrete experiences which are part of Igbo cultural practices.

Table 3 recapitulates the distribution of Transitive Material Processes (TMP) among the participants.

Table 3 distribution of Transitive Material Processes (TMP) among participants.

Actors	Process number	Total
He (Okonko); his heels;	003; 009; 030; 032; 033; 230; 233; 234; 235; ;243; 245; 248; 249; 261; 380; 383; 406; 433; 435; 440;	20
the founder of their town	011; 019;	2
He (Unoka); his face; He who; you; I;	047; 049; 055; 058; 059; 060; 065; 066; 088; 093; 105; 109; 111; 120; 122; 124; 142; 143; 149; 192; 203; 212; 218; 219; 224;	25
the village musicians	063; 064;	2
Unoka's band and their dancing egwuQwu;	069; 071;	2
the sun; It;	076; 214; 216	3
the cold and dry harmattan wind;	078;	1
a dense haze;	080;	1
Old men and children;	082;	1
the children;	086;	1
Who (Okoye); his friend;	112; 126; 131; 132; 133; 134; 167; 179; 180; 185; 221;	11
One	151;	1
Flute	153; 161;	2
Who;	217;	1

A child	241;	1
(Who) the doomed lad;	245;	1
the ogene of the town crier;	251; 252;	2
the crier;	253; 254;	2
Darkness;	266;	1
Dangerous animals;	268;	1
Ogbuefi Ezeugo; He;	299; 305; 306; 307; 313; 317; 318; 319	8
Those sons of wild animals;	316;	1
a murmur of suppressed anger;	320;	1
Mbaino;	336;	1
the Oracle;	358;	1
The clan;	359;	1
a man;	404;	1
Nwoye;	418; 461;	2
Okonkwo's senior wife;	443;	1
Nwoye's mother;	450;	1
What;	453;	1
a few men;	459;	1
		101

The analysis of TMPs more or less confirms what has been said about IMPs. The main actors in the extract as regards the described experiences are *Unoka* and *his band*, *Okonkwo*, *Okoye* and *Ogbuefi Ezeugo*. *Unoka* is the actor of 25 TMPs out of 101, corresponding to 24.75% whereas Okonkwo actualizes 20 TMPs out of 101, which gives 19.80%. As for Okoye, he is the actor in 11 IMPs out of 101, representing 10.89%. Finally, Ogbuefi Ezeugo is the actor of 8 TMPs out 101, and this gives 7.92%. The characters' actions uncover the various aspects of the values that governed the Igbo society before the arrival of white men.

Table 4 gives the summary of the distribution of Relational processes among participants. It is the level of language which serves to characterize and identify.

Table 4 distribution of Relational Processes in Extract 1

Types of relational process	Number	Percentage
Attributive	28	26.66%
Intensive	34	32.38%
Possessive	15	14.28%
Circumstantial	28	26.66%
Total	105	100%

As it can be deduced from table 4, Intensives are abundantly actualized in the extract; they occur 34 out 105 times, representing 32.38%. Attributives account for 26.66% with a number of 28/105, and Circumstantials score the same percentage and number. Regarding Possessives, they are used 15 out of 105 times, corresponding to 14.28%. These linguistics features basically describe cultural attitudes, codes and behaviors, which have maintained the unity and cohesion of the Igbo society.

Mental Processes are about feelings, sensing, thinking, perception, etc. Table 5 recapitulates their occurrence in the extract under consideration.

Table 5 Mental Process distribution

Sensers	Processes number	Total/Senser
Okonkwo; his wives and children; he; a little boy he	001; 027; 250; 259; 262; 284; 286; 395; 396; 397; 401; 413;	12
the old men;	010;	1
One;	018;	1
Unoka; You; his father Unoka;	043; 050.051;073; 074; 083; 084; 087; 128; 130; 135; 146; 148; 170; 184; 193; 197; 407;	18
I(Okoye); His visitor; You;	123; 166; 190; 198; 208;	5
One;	154;	1
It(snake)	270;	1
The happy voices of children	276;	1
old men and women	278;	1
Umuofia	337	1
Its priests and medicine men	339	1
Nobody	341	1
He (anybody)	348	1
the neighboring clans	349; 350;	2
the enemy clan	365	1
The elders, or ndichie	372	1
Everybody	374	1
His wives, especially the youngest	384	1
his little children	385	1
It	419	1
He (Ikemefuna)	452; 455; 457; 463; 465; 467	6
		59

Table 5 shows that Unoka is the senser of 18/59, corresponding to 30.50%; that Okonkwo is the senser of 12/59, that is, 20.33%; and that Ikemefuna realizes 6/59, which gives 10.16% almost as much as Okoye who actualizes 5/59, with a percentage of 8.47%. The other sensers are not actually involved in the mental experiences described by the author.

Behavioral Processes describe human experiences related to physiological and physiological compartments such as coughing, breathing, smiling, dreaming, etc. The analysis highlights some of these experiences as summarized in table 6.

Table 6 Distribution of Behavioral Processes among participants

Behavers	Number	Total/behavers
the spectators.	014;	1
He (Okonkwo);him;	024; 026; 226;	3
People;	099;	1
Unoka;	139; 186; 187; 204; 211;	5
		10

There are only 10 Behavioral processes as recapitulated in table 6, the majority is actualized by Unoka, Okonkwo's father, who is the behavior 5/10, that is, 50%, whereas Okonkwo is the behavior of 3/10, corresponding to 30%. This implies that the psychological and physiological aspects of experiences are to be considered for the understanding of the African past.

Moreover, the description of linguistic features reveals that the text contains some experiences which introduce central participants in the text, describing things that exist or happen without which the overall history or story cannot be understood. This is synthesized in the table below:

Table 7 Existential processes occurrence in the Extract 1

subject	Process number	Total
There	155; 199; 301; 342; 357;	5
		5

Generally, Existential processes are not very common in discourse. They appear only 5 times, representing that certain things exist or happen. This will clarify some behaviors, actions, feelings, impressions, etc.

The last aspect of the experiences which must be given attention is the clause of saying and its synonyms. Table 8 explicates the occurrence of Verbal Processes in Extract 1.

Table 8 Distribution of Verbal Processes among participants

Sayers	Process number	Total/sayer
It;	025;	1
Okonkwo; he;	035; 257; 380; 439; 442; 446	6
Unoka; he;	047; 049; 089;091; 117; 143; 193; 204;	8
another village;	066;	1
They(people)	100;	1
a neighbour (Okoye); Okoye; he;	105; 120; 124;168; 171;172; 177; 180;	8
They (Unoka and Okoye);	128; 136;	2
Our elders; the elders;	212; 239;	2
The ill-fated lad (Ikemefuna); whose sad story;	247; 370;	2
Every man of Umuofia; all; ten thousand men; The crowd; Many others;	256; 295; 300; 331; 332;	5
A snake, It;	269; 271;	2

the Ibo	279; 362;	2
a town crier with his otjene	283;	1
Ogbuefi Ezeugo; the crowd	304; 315; 324; 327	4
An ultimatum;	335;	1
the medicine;	344;	1
a playmate;	398;	1
she (senior wife); Nwoye's mother;	445; 451;	2
		50

As it can be inferred from table 8, experiences which are simply verbalized are basically realized by five sayers: 8/50 (16%) Verbal Processes are ascribed to Unoka, the same number to Okoye (8/50, which gives 16%), 6/50 to Okonkwo (12%) and 4/50 (8%) to Ogbuefi Ezeugo. This signifies that an important number of things (actions, feelings, states, etc.) are simply uttered or affirmed.

3.2. Quantitative Transitivity Analysis of Extract 2

The same analytic principles used for Extract 1 are applied here. Table 9 below provides the statistics of the process types.

Table 9 Distribution of process types

Process types	Number	Percentage
IMP	129	25.90%
TMP	141	28.31%
EP	12	2.40%
RP	91	18.27%
MeP	58	11.64%
VP	56	11.24%
BeP	8	1.60%
CP	3	0.60%
Total	498	100%

Table 9 reveals that TMPs outnumber IMPs: TMPs occur 141 times out of 498, representing 28.31% whereas IMPs occur 129 times out of 498, giving 25.90%. The analysis also shows that there is an important number of stative description through RPs which are used 91 times, corresponding to 18.27% followed by MEPs (58/498, that is, 11.64%) and VPs (56/498, corresponding to 11.24%). The other processes are rarely actualized in the Extract: there are 12 EPs out of 498 (2.40%), 8 BePs out of 498 (1.60%) and only 3 CPs out of 498 (0.60%). Therefore, it can be stated that the extract under analysis contains a lot of actions, description and utterances which account for the main characteristics of the Igbo as it will be explained in the section about the discussion.

Table 10 gives the statistics of the occurrence and the distribution of IMPs in Extract 2, clarifying the roles of the main actors or doers of actions.

Table 10 distribution of IMPs among participants.

Actors	Process number	Total
The story;	014;	1
Mr. Brown; He; You; I;	022; 024; 025; 029; 030; 117; 120; 133; 152; 153; 154; 156; 165; 166; 273; 462; 464; 466; 467; 475; 493; 496;	22
He (the District Commissioner);	068; 072;	2
They (people of Umuofia);	087; 089; 093; 114;	4
a frontal attack;	115;	1
Umuofia; Which,	126; 172; 272;	3
Strangers;	127; 131	2
the D.C.;	129;	1
the white men;	132;	1
More people; They;	134; 137; 140; 141; 145; 146;	6
Umuofia laborers;	147;	1
religion and education;	149;	1
Mr. Brown's mission;	150;	1
his two beautiful daughters;	170;	1
Okonkwo;	182; 185;	2
the initiation rite;	184;	1
Mr. Smith, he,	201; 241; 371; 373; 377; 378; 380; 388; 427; 445; 452;	11
Seeds	205	1
The child	221	1
evil children	231; 232;	2
Such stories	234;	1
a man	239	1
Enoch's devotion; Enoch, he, his heels; his feet; they (his feet);	249; 253; 255; 256; 257; 258; 259; 260; 356; 357; 359	11
It(conflict);	274; 275;	2
the ancestors	277;	1
The annual worship of the earth goddess;	285;	1
the egwugwu, they; all the masked egwugwu of Umuofia; The dreaded Otakagu; Ekwensu; the furious band; the first three or four egwugwu; the onrush of the egwugwu;you; the spirit of the clan;	291; 293; 294; 297; 299; 316; 317; 318; 320; 323; 327; 367; 374; 381; 405; 454; 456; 469; 473; 480; 495; 498;	22
the women (The Christian women);	292;	1
It;	313;	1
the very soul of the tribe	315;	1

the bells; Discordant bells;	322; 384;	2
Some of the elders of the clan;	328;	1
The leaders of the Christians; they;	333; 334;	2
such a thing;	342;	1
They (The leaders of the Christians)	349;	1
the two steps;	379;	1
a long stretch of the bamboo fence;	382; 383;	2
Machetes;	385;	1
Okeke; he;	392; 398; 399;	3
An unmistakable voice;	409;	1
I(Ajofia); He;	421; 437; 458; 459; 461;	5
this shrine	453;	1
a man;	465;	1
		129

Just like in table 2 on IMPs above, table 10 gives an exact idea about the main actors involved in Intransitive Material Processes, notably the colonial administrators (22/129, corresponding to 17.05%), the Egwugwus or the elders of the tribe (22/129, which gives 17.05%) and the new Christians represented by Enock (11/129, that is, 8.52%). Also, the Pastor or Priest is participant in a significant number of IMPs (11/129, that is, 8.52%). The other participants are either members of the tribe or of the administration; thus, their actions are taken into account in the analysis of the main actors' experiences.

Table 11 presents the tallies of TMPs distribution among participants.

Table 11 distribution of TMPs among participants

Actors	Process number	Total
The white man; he;	003; 004;	2
Kernel;	005	1
much money;	006	1
Enoch	015; 016	2
He (Mr. Brown); you; the missionary;	023; 066; 116; 135; 158; 159;	6
He (Akunna); You;	028; 044; 080; 083;	4
Neither of them (Mr. Brown and Akunna);	031;	1
Who (God); He;	035; 039; 052; 076;	4
The tree;	050;	1
We (people of Umuofia); people; they;	053; 086; 090; 091; 094; 109; 118; 119; 139;	9
He (The head of your church);	065;	1
Your queen;	071;	1
He (the District Commissioner);	073; 074	2
his servants;	092;	1

many of them (our fathers);	100;	1
those who;	107;	1
Mr. Brown's school;	143; 151;	2
Okonkwo; he;	164; 181; 183;	3
The clan;	173;	1
Who (the warlike men)	190	1
He (the Reverend James Smith); Mr. Smith; We, Our strength,	194; 215; 227; 343; 347; 348; 375; 376; 396; 397; 401; 446; 494;	13
the children of light;	198;	1
many of his flock	202	1
It	203;	1
that the kingdom of God;	208;	1
Our Lord Himself; Our Lord; Lord;	209; 213; 214; 351; 353;	5
few the number	211;	1
a young woman from the church; This woman;	216; 217;	2
her heathen husband;	218;	1
The child(<i>ocjbanje</i>); this child, it;	220; 222; 224; 225; 226;	5
some of the most faithful;	230;	1
Such stories;	235;	1
the drums;	240; 242;	2
The over-zealous converts;	243; 244;	2
the son of the snake-priest;	247; 248;	2
the excessive energy (in Enoch's small body); it,	262; 263;	2
He (Enoch); Enoch;	267; 271; 284; 300; 301; 305; 394; 395; 400;	9
the ancestors of the clan;	276;	1
a man;	278; 279; 281;	3
Anything;	282;	1
The Christian women;	288;	1
Some of their men(The Christian women)	289; 290;	2
the <i>egwugwu</i> ; The other <i>egwugwu</i> ; The band of <i>egwugwu</i> ; It (the onrush of the <i>egwugwu</i>); <i>we</i> ; <i>you</i> ; one of them;	296; 298; 302; 303; 304; 365; 366; 368; 408; 443; 451; 457; 482; 483;	14
Umuofia;	306;	1
the Mother of the Spirits; countless spirits; they;	307; 324; 325; 339;	4
Ekwensu;	319;	1
the elders of the clan;	329;	1
The chilling sound;	337;	1
They (the District Commissioner and his court messengers);	344;	1
Wisdom;	363;	1

many lives;	364;	1
the door;	372;	1
He (Okeke);	391; 477;	2
Space;	411;	1
He (Ajofia);	415; 417; 423; 436; 439; 441;	6
clouds of smoke;	420;	1
it (his rattling spear);	440;	1
It (this shrine);	455;	1
		141

The table above shows that the main participants in TMPs described in Extract 2 are the leaders of Umuofia, that is, *Egwugwus* and *Reverend James Smith*: the *Egwugwus* are involved in 14/141 (9.92%) almost the number attributed to the representatives of the new religion, namely *the Reverend James Smith* who is the actor of 13/141 (9.21%). Enoch and the people of Umuofia are ascribed the same number of TMPs (9/141, representing 6.43%) whereas Ajofia the leading *Egwugwu* and *Mr. Brown* are the actors of 6/141 (4.25%). Actually, these are the main characters whose actions are determining in the understanding of the African past as described by Chinua Achebe. The other actors belong to one of the groups: the colonial administrators and the Christian leaders, the new converts and the people of Umuofia.

The occurrence of Relational Processes and their distribution are synthesized in table 12 below:

Table 12 Distribution of Relational Processes among participants

Types of relational process	Number	Percentage
Attributive	24	26.37%
Intensive	34	37.36%
Possessive	01	1.09%
Circumstantial	32	35.16%
Total	91	100%

Relational Processes are one of the cornerstones of the grammar of transitivity, for they serve to characterize and to identify. Table 12 reveals that extract 2 is full of characterization and identifications: Intensive clauses are used 34 times out of 91, which gives 37.36%; Circumstantial ones occur 32 times out of 91, corresponding to 35.16%; and Attributives ones score 24 out of 91, that is, 26.37%. This connotes meanings about positive or negative attitudes, important states and beliefs which constitute the values of the Igbo society.

The inner experience is also to be taken account of in the description of transitivity patterns. Table 13 below provides the statistics about the occurrence and distribution of Mental Processes among participants.

Table 13 Mental Process distribution

Sensors	Process number	Total/Senser
Who (men and women);	002;	1
They (Mr. Brown and Akunna);	032;	1
We (people of Umuofia);	037; 096; 097; 104; 108; 177; 179;	7
I (Akunna);	058;	1
You (Akunna);	078; 081;	2

He (God); Chukwu;	082; 106;	2
Our fathers;	098;	1
Mr. Brown; he;	113; 157; 161; 200; 206; 207;	6
Women;	125;	1
They(strangers);	128;	1
Okonkwo; he;	163; 168; 186; 188; 189; 190	6
It	112;	1
He (the Reverend James Smith); Mr Smith; you; I; he;	195; 197; 228; 229; 370; 387; 389; 425; 463; 476; 484; 485; 488; 491;	14
Those (the most faithful);	236;	1
the son of the snake-priest;	246;	1
He (Enoch);	264; 358;	2
the oldest man in Umuofia;	310;	1
a strange and fearful sound;	312;	1
the sacred bull-roarer;	326;	1
They (men strong in <i>ogwu</i> , or medicine);	332;	1
They (The leaders of the Christians); a few other Christians;	335; 355; 362;	3
No one;	341;	1
<i>We (Egwugwu)</i> ;	447; 450;	2
		58

As it can be noticed from the table above, there are basically four sensers whose inner experiences are more described and essential for the analysis of the extract under consideration. These are *the Reverend James Smith* who is involved in 14/58 MePs (24.13%); *the People of Umuofia* who actualize 7/58 MePs (12.06%); and *Mr Brown* and *Okonkwo* who are both the participants in 6/58 (10.34%). This description of participants' inner experiences allows to clarify the ins and the outs of the collapse of the Igbo society.

The analysis of Extract 2 also highlights some Behavioral Processes which construe physiological and psychological behaviors like breathing, coughing, smiling, dreaming, etc. Table 14 below summarizes them.

Table 14 Behavioral Processes distribution

Behavers	Processes number	Total/behavers
the outsider (Enock)	251;	1
the Mother of the Spirits;	308; 336;	2
the very soul of the tribe;	314;	1
He (Mr. Smith)	338; 352; 402;	3
Ajofia	430;	1
		8

There are only eight (8) BePs in Extract 2. While Mr Smith, the English laughs or smiles, the main behaviors described in the extract is weeping, which actually construe some troublesome experiences as the colonizers impose their culture on the people of Umuofia. Mr Smith smiles contrast with the people of Umuofia's grief and concerns.

Table 15 below describes Existential Processes in Extract 2. They represent that something exists or happens and this is to be taken account of in the analysis, for what happens or exists determines people's actions, mentality and behavior.

Table 15 Existential Processes occurrence

Process	Process number	Total
There	001; 007; 008; 034; 040; 060; 088;176; 361; 410;062 ; 064	12

As stated earlier, the analysis reveals that certain experiences exist or happen, and these are the effects or consequences brought by the colonizers. The table shows that there are 12 Existential Processes, and the existents are feelings, *people, gods or God*, etc. These experiences actually represent some facts and circumstances related to the clash of culture.

Finally, the description of Transitivity patterns reveals a significant number of Verbal Processes synthesized in table 16 below:

Table 16 distribution of Verbal Processes among participants

Sayers	Process number	Total/sayer
his father	017	1
Mr. Brown; he; You;we;	018; 20; 033; 038; 041; 056; 079; 103; 121; 122; 123;	11
One of the great men in that village (Akunna);you;I;	027; 036; 045; 047; 059; 063; 102; 110;	8
the interpreter;	070;	1
Who	111;	1
Who(strangers);	130;	1
Who(Nwoye);	160	1
They(people of Umuofia);	178;	1
He(the Reverend James Smith); The white man;he;	199; 233; 340; 346; 471; 478; 489;	7
The villagers	250	1
The child	219;	1
the sermon;	265;	1
He (Enoch);I; Enoch;	268; 269; 295;	3
a man;	280;	1
They (The leaders of the Christians); the men;	350; 354;	2
Okeke;	393;	1
He(Ajofia);	418; 419; 422; 426; 433; 438; 444;	7
Immortals;	424;	1
You (the interpreter);	442; 445; 472;	3
They (Fathers of Umuofia);we;	460; 470; 486;	3
		56

Table 16 uncovers that the majority of verbal Processes is actualized by *Mr Brown* (11/56, corresponding to 19.64%), *Akuna* (8/56, that is 14.28%) and *Ajofia* (7/56, which gives 12.5%). These are the main sayers and surely the main actors in the new system established by the colonial authorities.

4. Discussion and Interpretation of the Findings

The various process types have been meticulously and quantitatively described in the two extracts under analysis; however, all the linguistic features highlighted in this analysis cannot be interpreted. They are so numerous; therefore, the analysis will be basically carried out on the qualitative basis, considering the most relevant linguistic items. However, it is worth presenting the statistics overall before emphasizing them qualitatively. The Transitivity description of Extract 1 reveals that Achebe describes a lot of concrete doings and happenings in his novel, and these actions are construed through IMPs (137/467, that is, 29.33%) and TMPs (101/467, which gives 21.62%). Also, there is a significant number of relational clauses or processes of being and having (RPs), which occur 105/467 times, corresponding to 22.48%. Furthermore, the analysis uncovers 59/467 MePs (12.63%), meaning that some experiences related to the world of consciousness are represented in Extract 1. A lot of doings, happenings, beings, having are simply verbalized or ineffectual; Verbal Processes crop up 50/467 times, representing 10.70%. The other of experiences are rarely represented.

The majority of doings and happenings, beings and havings are ascribed to Okonkwo, the main Character of the novel, whose brave actions and grave failures allow to understand the glorious but imperfect past of Africa. This is exemplified in material (*brought, throw, rested, worked, took, married*), relational (*was, had*) and mental (*agreed, felt*) clauses such as *His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat; It was this man that Okonkwo threw in a fight which the old men agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of their town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights* (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). This glorious past includes elements such as the system of justice, politics, marriage, promotion, work, etc. Africans were not lazy people or monkeys without any civilization or culture as pretended European writers; their societies were well organized and based on specific and well-defined principles. Achebe writes: *During the planting season Okonkwo worked daily on his farms from cock-crow until the chickens went to roost. He was a very strong man and rarely felt fatigue* (410, 412, 413); *fortunately, among these people a man was judged according to his worth and not according to the worth of his father; he was young but he had won fame as the greatest wrestler in the nine villages. He was a wealthy farmer and had two barns full of yams, and had just married his third wife. To crown it all he had taken two titles and had shown incredible prowess in two inter-tribal wars* (226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233). These are among other things which fell apart and which continue to fall apart in contemporary Africa. It is common knowledge that African countries are corrupt; that work is no longer a value; that the system of promotion is no longer based on personal worth, etc. Children of Presidents become presidents in Gabon, Togo, Chad, etc.; it is the proof that African peoples have foregone their values.

The imperfect facets of these foregoing values are illustrated through Unoka's inner or outer experiences: *Unoka was, of course, a debtor, and he owed every neighbor some money, from a few cowries to quite substantial amounts* (53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60). Africa has become Unoka who owes money to the World Bank, to China, to Russia, etc. Furthermore, the author describes human sacrifice, the discrimination of outcast people, the killing of twins which emphasize the shortcomings in the Igbo cultural habits as pictured in the following clauses: *as the man who had cleared his throat dew up and raised his matchet, Okonkwo looked away. He heard the blow. The pot fell and broke in the sand. He heard Ikemefuna cry, "My father, they have killed me! as he ran towards him. Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his matchet and cut him down* (p.49)

The statistics of linguistic features in Extract 2 show that MPs are predominantly used, cropping up 141/498 times (28.31%), followed by TMPs occurring 129/498 times (25.90%) and RPs occurring 91/498 times (18.27%). MePs and VPs almost score the same number, used 58/498 (11.64%) and 56/498 (11.24%), respectively. The other types of processes are less used in the Extract. The main actors, sensors, sayers, tokens and carriers are Mr. Brown, Mr. Smith and the District Commissioner (the representatives of the colonial administration) on one side, and on the other side the people of Umuofia and the Egwugwu. Their experiences (inner and outer, and beings and havings) are represented in such material clauses as *And so he built a school and a little hospital in Umuofia. He went from family to family begging people to send their children to his school. But at first they only sent their slaves or sometimes their lazy children* (116, 117, 118, 119). This shows that colonizers designed a perfect and methodic plan to deconstruct Igbo cultural values. This effort also took the form of preaching, begging, explanation via verbal, mental and relational clauses represented by *argued, prophesied, begged, learned, see, be in clauses* (120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128).

As a result, The Igbo people were divided and many of them adopted the western values as exemplified in the following clauses: In the end Mr. Brown's arguments began to have an effect. More people came to learn in his school, and he

encouraged them with gifts of singlets and towels. They were not all young, these people who came to learn. Some of them were thirty years old or more. They worked on their farms in the morning and went to school in the afternoon (133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140). The people of Umuofia and the Egwugwu's efforts to maintain unity and keep their ancestral cultures were of no avail, and this is illustrated in such material clauses as but Okonkwo had driven him away with the threat that if he came into his compound again, he would be carried out of it; Okonkwo was deeply grieved and it was not just a personal grief. He mourned for the clan, which he saw breaking up and falling apart, and he mourned for the warlike men of Umuofia, who had so unaccountably become soft like women. (164, 165, 166, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191).

5. Conclusion

Things Fall Apart (Achebe, 1958) is a very complex literary work which gives a vivid and captivating description of the Igbo society's social, political, economic and cultural organization before the arrival of white men in the southern part of Nigeria. Capturing the message encoded through such a rich description can be a challenge. The methodic analysis of Transitivity in two extracts has revealed a diverse occurrence of process types the interpretation of which has clarified the tragic collapse of the Igbo culture or civilization. Actually, it did exist, it was viable, for it kept unity and cohesion within this society; but it was not perfect just like all cultures, even European ones. The systems of marriage, politics, economy, justice, etc. obeyed well-defined procedures, and these were thoroughly and intelligently deconstructed and replaced by western values. Chinua Achebe demonstrated the historicity of African societies, showing clearly that those who affirmed the contrary were definitely wrong. When one is informed about what is happening in Africa where there is no justice, no democracy, no development (precisely in Central Africa and even beyond), and where wars and corruption prevail in many countries, one can rightly state that things keep on falling apart. *Things Fall Apart* is more than a simple novel but actually an educational history book that must be taught at all levels and everywhere in Africa.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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