



Research Paper

Interpersonal Meaning Analysis of two Excerpts from Mariama Bâ's *So Long A Letter*: A Systemic Approach

Daniel T. Yokossi

Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Literature, Arts, and Humanities.

FLASH-Adjarra, University of Abomey-Calavi, Republic of Benin

Correspondence: Daniel T. Yokossi, Faculty of Literature, Arts, and Humanities.

FLASH-Adjarra, University of Abomey-Calavi, Republic of Benin

BP.176 Abomey-Calavi

Abstract

This research work explores the interpersonal meaning in two excerpts from Mariama Bâ's novel entitled *So Long A Letter*. Indeed, the research aims not only at finding out how interactants in the selected excerpts have established and maintained social role relationships but also at examining their use of the English language to make sense of the world around them. It further aims at decoding both the author's world view and ideology behind her writing for a better understanding of the studied excerpts on the one hand and the whole novel as an indirect result on the other. To achieve such aims two excerpts have been culled from the above mentioned novel on purpose and scrutinized in the light of the Systemic Functional Linguistics theory being applied. Following the quantitative method, statistics of the data collected from the analysis carried out have been drawn not only for the classification and counting of the excerpts linguistic features but also to pave the way for the qualitative method which has provided avenues to the discovery of deepest levels of the studied excerpts meanings via the interpretation of the findings. Indeed, the results arrived at clearly indicate, that Mariama Bâ has encoded tremendous meanings through her outstanding use of the declarative mood types. This is revelatory of the author's serious concern about widowhood, remarriage, levirate, and polygamy in Africa and how important she believes it is to share knowledge about such social evils for better African families' lives. The higher use of modalisation in both studied excerpts reveals the suggestive tenor created by the author to balance the power inequality inherent in modulation. The high specification of circumstantial meaning in the studied texts provides details to the information given therein and contributes to boost their experiential density.

Keywords: Interpersonal meaning, modality, Mood, SFL, tenor.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The fundamental purpose that language has evolved to serve is to enable us to make meanings with each other (Egins; 1994:11). As a matter of fact, Halliday (1985a, 1985b) acknowledges three different types of meanings that language, whether written or spoken, is structured to make all together. Such meanings include the interpersonal meaning, the experiential meaning and the textual meaning respectively realized through the mood patterns, the transitivity patterns and the theme patterns of the oral or written piece of text. This article explores one of these meanings namely the interpersonal meaning in two excerpts selected from Mariama Bâ's novel entitled *So Long A Letter*. Indeed, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) contend that the interpersonal meaning is another aspect of the clause meaning and that its key grammatical system is MOOD (p.134). In that perspective, the investigation aims at uncovering how and what meanings have been encoded through the mood patterns of the selected excerpts clauses in order to unveil the author's perspectives or world view of the different social questions raised therein.

Apart from the abstract and the reference list, the work has been broken into six cruxes viz. the introduction, the theoretical framework, the methodology, the identification of mood, modality and adjuncts in the selected excerpts, the interpretation of the findings and then the conclusion. The upcoming subdivision of the article is devoted to the theoretical framework.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 An Overview of the Grammar of Interpersonal Meaning

Eggins (2004) defines the interpersonal meanings as meanings about our role relationships with other people and our attitudes to each other. She further adds that whatever use we put language to we are always expressing an attitude and taking up a role (p.14). In fact, the interpersonal meaning accounts for a different set of meanings which focus on speakers' and listeners' interactions with each other and with the material being conveyed in terms of attitudes and stances expressed in the discourse. The realizations of these meanings occur in terms of mood choices: statement, question, command; and modality realized by modal operators (Eggins, 2004: 172) such as '**might**', '**could**', '**and should**'. They are also realized by adjuncts like 'probably', '**usually**' or different sentence adjuncts which relate to the whole of the sentence; examples include '**frankly**', '**unfortunately**'. From a Hallidayan perspective, the grammar of interaction is viewed as a semantic perspective. Drawing on his point of view, one of the things we are doing, at whatever time we use language to interact, is to establish a relationship between us that is to say, between the person speaking now and the person who will probably speak next (Halliday, 1984, 1985a: 68 – 71). Indeed, to achieve this vital role of language, Eggins (1994), contends that "we take turns at speaking, we take on different speech roles in the exchange" (p.149). In a nutshell, the interpersonal function relates to all uses of language to express social or personal relations (Halliday, 1971). It is expressed through mood and modality choices. Actually, the mood structure of the clause refers to "the organization of a set of functional constituents including the constituent "Subject" (Eggins, 1994, p.152). Mood analysis then entails a plain understanding of these functional constituents of a clause.

2.2. The Constituents of the Mood

Eggins (1994) broadly identified three elements to the MOOD constituents namely: the expression of **polarity**: either "yes" (positive polarity) or "no" (negative polarity); the nominal-type element which she terms "**subject**"; and the verbal-type element which she calls "**finite**" (p.156). Indeed, of the three aforementioned constituents, only two viz. the "**subject**" (always expressed by a nominal group) and the "**finite**" (always expressed by a verbal group) are essential to the MOOD given that the polarity constituent can be ellipsed without jeopardizing the argument (p.156).

According to Halliday (1985a:76), the subject realizes the thing by reference to which the proposition can be affirmed or denied. It provides the person or thing in whom is vested the success or failure of the proposition, what is "held responsible". Indeed, the identification of the subject can be achieved by the tag test. The element that gets picked up by the pronoun in the tag is the subject. The subject can also be detected by changing the verb from singular to plural or vice versa. The corresponding part of the clause that you will have to change is the subject (Eggins, 1994:157).

As for the finite, Halliday (1985a) defines it in terms of its function in the clause to make the proposition definite, to anchor the proposition, to bring it down to earth in a way that we can argue about it (p.75). As a matter of fact, the identification of the finite also involves the tag test. Actually, the verbal part of the tag tells you which element the finite is. Where the verbal part of your clause consists of two or more words (e.g. were reading, will have left, has been published), the finite will always be the first of the verbal elements (were, will, has). The finite carries out its function in the clause through what Halliday (ibid.) calls verbal operators of which he identifies two kinds: the temporal finite verbal operators and the finite modal operators. While the former ones anchor the proposition by reference to time giving by so doing tense to the finite, the latter ones anchor the proposition by reference to modality. The finite then carries either tense or modality to make the propositions arguable. The finite also consists of the semantic feature of polarity, since to make something arguable it has to be either positive (something is) or negative (something isn't). It is important to underscore that there will only be one finite per clause.

2.3 Mood and Modality Types

2.3.1 Mood Types and Speech Functions

Mood refers to variables such as the types of clause structure (declarative, interrogative, imperative or exclamative), the degree of certainty or obligation expressed (modality), the use of tags, vocatives, attitudinal words which are either positively or negatively loaded with purr and snarl words, expressions of intensification and politeness markers of various kinds. Actually, the mood system analysis of the clause provides interactants involved in the dialogue with the resources for giving or demanding a commodity, either information or goods-&-services (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

In the process of the interactional relationship to be established while using language, interactants take on different speech roles like giving and demanding, and make such moves as statement, question, offer and command which Halliday (1985) names speech functions. This state of affairs, leads to different mood types.

Indeed, each mood type is related to a specific speech function though it (a mood type) can be outstandingly used to express a different speech function from its usual one at times. The following is a recap table of the mood types and their respective speech functions.

Table1: Mood types and their speech functions (extracted from Halliday, 1985 & Eggins, 1994).

Mood Types	Speech Functions
-declarative mood	-giving information by stating what is or happens
-interrogative mood	-request of information
-modulated interrogative mood	-indirect/tempered request of information
-imperative mood	-getting somebody to do something
-modulated imperative mood	-getting indirectly/ in a tempered way somebody to do something by using, say, polite modals.
-exclamative mood	-expressing wonder, surprise, bewilderment

2.3.2 Modality Types

Complex area of English grammar, modality is concerned with the different ways in which a language user can intrude on his/her message expressing attitudes and judgments of different kinds. According to Halliday (1985a, p.335), “modality is the area of meaning that lies between yes and no –the intermediate ground between positive and negative polarity.” Furthermore, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), argue that modality is the speaker judgment, or request of the judgment of the listener, on the status of what is being said.

In other respects, Fowler (1986) stated the following about modality: Modality is the grammar of explicit comment, the means by which people express their degree of commitment to the truth of the propositions they utter, and their views on the desirability or otherwise, of the states of affairs referred to (p. 132). As it can be grasped from the above definitions, the grammar of modality includes two essential components namely *modalization and modulation*. According to Eggins (1994, p.180), *modalization* is the speaker’s expression of judgment about the certainty, likelihood, or frequency of something happening or being. It operates either implicitly or explicitly through such mood Adjuncts as: *I’m sure, I think, it is possible, it is certain, it is probable*...etc. Indeed, modalization embraces the expression of two kinds of meanings viz. probability and usuality through the choice of a finite modal operator like *may, might, could can* etc; or further, through the use of mood adjuncts of probability, certainty such as *possibly, maybe, perhaps, probably*, and eventually through both altogether. As for modulation which is the second dimension of modality complementing the former, it is the expression of degrees of obligation and inclination through such finite modal operators as *must, should, have to* etc, or by an expansion of the predicator via a passive verb or an adjective (Halliday,1985a, p. 86).

III. METHODOLOGY

Any scientific research work requires a methodology. As a matter of fact, the one at hand is not an exception to that principle. Indeed, to reach the target of this investigation scientifically, two excerpts that fit to the study carried out in this article have been culled from Mariama Bâ’s *So Long A Letter*. In addition to that criterion of suitability to the study, the choices of both excerpts have been motivated by the fact that they follow each other logically in the unfolding of the story narrated therein. To be specific, the second excerpt is the logical result of the first one. Moreover, the research design appealed to in this article is that of the mixed quantitative and qualitative methodology. Following the quantitative methodology that has paved the way to the qualitative methodology, a theoretically founded interpersonal meaning analysis of the selected excerpts has been carried out. Indeed, the units of analysis have been the clauses the selected texts have been broken into. Furthermore, the analysis has been carried out following the keys designed for the identification of the **Mood, Modality and Adjunct types** embedded in the chosen texts. Actually, the keys of analysis are presented in the appendices right before the analyses proper. Once collected, the data have been summarized, organized, numerated, categorized and tabulated statistically. The qualitative methodology that followed has allowed to uncover, via the interpretation of the most interpretable recorded linguistic patterns of the excerpts, the encoded meanings of the collected data for a deeper understanding of the social issues raised in the selected texts by the female writer understudy.

IV. MOOD, MODALITY AND ADJUNCT TYPES IDENTIFICATION IN THE SELECTED EXCERPTS

Mood Types		Excerpt 1	Excerpt 2	Total	Percentage
Declaratives	Full declarative	50	50	100	81.30%
	Elliptical declarative	01	00	01	0.81%
Interrogatives	Polar interrogative	01	01	02	1.62%
	Elliptical polar interrogative	00	00	00	00%
	Full Wh-interrogative	01	03	04	3.25%

	Elliptical Wh-interrogative	00	00	00	00%
Modulated Interrogative		00	01	01	0.81%
Imperative		05	02	07	5.69%
Exclamative		03	00	03	2.43%
Minor Clause		01	05	06	4.87%
Modality types					
Modalization		02	03	05	20.83%
Modulation		10	09	19	79.16%
Adjuncts Types	Circumstantial	56	50	106	54.35%
	Comment	00	00	00	00%
	Conjunctive	27	35	62	31.79%
	Continuity	00	00	00	00%
	Mood	10	03	13	06.66%
	Polarity	01	00	01	0.51%
	Vocative	05	08	13	06.66%

Table 2: Statistical table of the recorded mood, modality and adjunct types in the selected excerpts

The above statistical table accounts for the data collected after analyzing the selected excerpts. As it explicitly appears, one hundred and twenty four (124) mood types have been identified in the selected texts. Moreover, twenty four (24) modality types and a hundred and ninety-five (195) different types of adjuncts have been recorded as well. To descend to particulars, the full declarative mood types stand head and shoulders above all the mood types recorded in both excerpts. More specifically, of the one hundred and twenty-four mood types identified in the studied passages, the declarative mood types all alone count one hundred (100) representing 81.30% of the overall mood types embedded in the excerpts. It is conspicuous to note that both studied excerpts equally embed the same number of full declarative mood type: fifty (50) each. The elliptical declarative mood type is virtually non-existent. Only one (01) elliptical declarative mood has been found representing 0.81% of the total number of mood types recorded in both excerpts. The Polar interrogative mood types are just two (02) in number in both studied excerpts while the full wh-interrogative mood types multiply them by two and count only four (04) representing 1.62% and 3.25% respectively. Remarkably, the elliptical polar interrogative as well as the elliptical wh-interrogative are both missing in the studied texts (00%) each. Though missing in the first excerpt, there is one modulated interrogative mood (0.81%) recorded in the second one. The imperative moods count seven (7) whereas the exclamative moods are just three (3) representing respectively 5.69% and 2.43% of the overall mood types identified in the excerpts. Indeed, both texts embed six (06) minor clauses.

On the other hand, both types of modality viz. modalization and modulation have been identified in the texts. While modalizations count just five (5) in both studied texts representing 20.83% of all the modality embedded in the excerpts, modulations are 19 that is to say 79.16% of the excerpts recorded modality.

As for the adjunct types, apart from the comment and continuity adjunct types that are missing in both studied excerpts, all the other adjunct types have been recorded though at relatively different rates. To go into detail, the circumstantial adjuncts come top of all the other adjunct types with a total number of 106 representing 54.35% of the overall number of the recorded adjuncts in the analyzed excerpts. The conjunctive adjuncts come next with a fewer number: 62 viz. 31.79% of all the adjunct types in both excerpts. The mood and vocative adjuncts count the same number in both excerpts precisely thirteen (13) representing a percentage of 6.66% of the identified adjuncts. The polarity adjunct type is nearly missing and counts the least number of all the recorded adjuncts: just one (01 / 0.51%). The statistics of the collected data, as presented so far, is going to be interpreted in the next subsection which deals with the interpretation of the findings.

V. INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

The mood analysis carried out for the collection of the data presented above would be of no avail if not followed by an interpretation. As a consequence, this sub-section entitled interpretation of the findings aims at deriving meanings from the mood patterns unveiled by the technical analysis. As a matter of fact, the different interactants in the selected excerpts have taken on different speech roles also referred to as speech functions (Halliday 1985a:69) in interacting with one another. Statements, offers, and command have been made. Likewise, questions have also been asked. The large numbers of statements made in the declarative moods that are head and shoulders above the other types of mood in the overall analysis together with the questions in the interrogative moods indicate that information has been exchanged. More to the point, the offers and commands made through the few numbers of imperatives recorded in the studied excerpts show that goods and services have also been exchanged among the interactants. Looking closely into the mood patterns of the excerpts, one notices that both the declarative and the interrogative moods are far more in number than the imperative moods recorded in the excerpts. To be explicit there are one hundred and seven (107) declarative and interrogative moods in both excerpts while there are only seven (07) imperative moods and just one modulated interrogative mood. Such mood patterns of the examined excerpts reveal that more information than goods and services has been exchanged in the studied texts. Alternatively put, there have been more propositions than proposals in the

studied excerpts. To start with, such linguistic depiction of the texts is not surprising at all in so far as the field register variable of the studied texts is all about love, what it is, what it is not and what it ought to be. One then easily understands why there has been less exchange of goods and services than information. Actually true love is not interested. It is nothing material to exchange either. That is what Ramatoulaye the widow emphasizes in the first excerpt when she tells Tamsir the following: "You forget that I have a heart, a mind that I am not an object to be passed from hand to hand. You don't know what marriage means to me: it is an act of faith and of love, the total surrender of oneself to the person one has chosen and who has chosen you." Furthermore, the mood patterns of the texts as presented above suggest that there have been more arguments about what is than about what happened. But what is it that is, about which argument is so much made in both excerpts? And what is that which happened, but is less argued about in the selected texts? As a matter of fact, the linguistic features of the speech roles of giving and demanding as taken on by the interactants in the excerpts depict a sad true life reality. Indeed it's when one is alive that one matters to people. After death, what matters to the people who were close to the late person including his/her family members is no more the deceased, no matter how good s/he has been to them, but what s/he has left behind as goods that they can profit from. This is illustrated by the information exchanged in the following declarative mood: "There are Daba and her husband, who have demonstrated their financial acumen by buying up all your brother's properties." Though Modou Fall's death has lasted only forty days, all his properties have already been sold off. More to the point, as any good reader of the selected passages would have noticed it; there has been almost no exchange about Modou Fall, Ramatoulaye's dead beloved husband in both texts. But nearly all the information exchanged has gone round the widow he (Modou Fall) left behind forty days earlier as said by Ramatoulaye the widow herself in the quotation hereafter: "Tamsir, purge yourself of your dreams of conquest. They have lasted forty days." Looking closely into the imperative mood and the declarative mood that ensued in the quotation, one realizes that Tamsir, elder brother of Modou Fall, started his wedding plan since the very first day of his brother's death. Shit! How disgusting! How bad it sounds to the ears! However it's an undeniable life reality sustained by retrograde customs and traditions still ongoing in Africa in particular.

The modulated interrogative mood, the imperative moods and the vocative adjuncts as used in both studied excerpts have revealed their tenor dimension. Drawing upon Eggin's (1994:193) statement that a striking indication of power is who gets to be the speaker in an exchange and for how long, it can be derived from the above mood patterns that the power among such personae of the texts as Madou, Tamsir, Farmata, Daouda Dieng and Ramatoulaye is unequal as the last one holds the dominance of the speaker role in the whole interaction. In addition, the social role held by Ramatoulye as a widow still plunged into mourning her beloved husband's death, and that held by Madou, Tamsir, Daouda Dieng as suitors are non-reciprocal. Besides, the use of vocatives is not reciprocal among these characters. However, contact among them is frequent as Ramatoulaye has made use of a lot of vocative adjuncts to address Tamsir and Daouda Dieng. Likewise, while addressing Ramatoulaye, Farmata used a vocative adjunct in the sixty fifth clause of the analysis carried out in the appendices. Furthermore, considering Farmata's words which are void of the least deference when addressing Ramatoulaye after the latter had rejected Daouda's demand to marry her, is evidence that contact between them is frequent. The non-modulated interrogative mood in the fiftieth clause and the non-modulated declarative mood in the fifty-seventh clause of the first excerpt as well as the modulated declarative moods in clauses sixty-three and sixty-four illustrate this quite well.

The affective involvement among them on the other hand is low as Ramatoulaye is neither emotionally nor affectively involved in the suggestive love relationship offered to her by Tamsir and Daouda Dieng. Moreover, though the field register variable of both texts is all about love, no words of endearment have been used among the interactants.

As displayed in the statistical table presented above, three exclamative moods have been recorded after analysis. Indeed, they are a blend of interrogative and declarative patterns. They have been used by Ramatoulaye to express her surprise and disgust about Tamsir's love declaration to her while still deeply plunged in mourning. In the same vein, the minor clauses have also been used to express surprise or disgust about Tamsir's wedding plan and Ramatoulaye's refusal to get married with Daouda Dieng a rich man, a deputy, a doctor, of her own age group, with just one wife because of her noble conception of marriage. One learns more about her marriage ideology in her reply to Tamsir from the sixty-second clause to the sixty-seventh one of the first excerpt provided hereafter: "You don't know what marriage means to me: it is an act of faith and of love, the total surrender of oneself to the person one has chosen and who has chosen you. " (I emphasized the word 'chosen ')". Farmata a woman like Ramatoulaye was surprised that the latter could reject that "glittering" love relationship offered to her by Daouda. Indeed, Farmata seems to ignore that it is not all that glitters that is gold. In fact, for Farmata, it was God's providence for Ramatoulaye. But contrarily Ramatoulaye's conscience could not accommodate to enable her to accept that marriage. As a matter of fact, Mariama Bâ designed these two conflicting personae to convey a very important message about marriage. If for Farmata, it is not any problem to get married to a man as a second wife just because the latter is socially highly ranked, intellectually qualified

and is flushed with money, Ramatoulaye on the contrary sees a problem in that. For Ramatoulaye, love is not material and ought to be absolutely fair-minded. Furthermore, polygamy is not to be promoted. In fact it ought to be discouraged as it is a social scourge. In that perspective, Ramatoulaye said the following in the sixteenth and seventeenth declarative moods of the second excerpt: "You think the problem of polygamy is a simple one. Those who are involved in it know the constraints, the lies, the injustice that weigh down their consciences in return for the ephemeral joys of change". Actually, Mariama Bâ has designed Ramatoulaye's persona to serve as a wedding model for peaceful homes. Through her, the author is inviting both women and men in general and candidates to wedding in particular to avoid laying the foundation of marriage on materialism and social esteem lest it might unexpectedly collapse someday.

As it can be noticed from the statistical table presented in the forgoing section above, five modalizations have been identified in both selected texts chiefly two in the first one and three in the second. Both modalizations in the first excerpt have been carried out by Tamsir not to express the probability or frequency of propositions but to express deference to the Almighty God whom he wants to answer his prayers for the late Modou Fall. Likewise, in the second excerpt, the other three modalizations are all realized by Farmata not to express the probability or frequency of propositions but to express her materialistic judgments of Ramatoulaye's stand vis-à-vis Daouda Dieng's proposal to get married with her.

As for the modulations, they are nineteen in both texts on the whole. All the ten modulations in the first excerpt have been realized by Ramatoulaye. Moreover four out of the nine modulations recorded in the second text have also been carried out by the same persona. It is important to underscore that none of the fourteen modulations made used by Ramatoulaye is realized to argue about the obligation or inclination of proposals. They are therefore unmarked modality choices that she has used to pass her judgments on the awkwardness of the traditional and customary prescriptions that almost reify women in some societies. She made it clear in the following quotation of hers in the first excerpt while addressing Tamsir: "Ah, yes! Your strategy is to get in before any other suitor, to get in before Mawdo, the faithful friend, who has more qualities than you and who also, according to custom to custom, can inherit the wife. You forget that I have a heart, a mind that I am not an object to be passed from hand to hand." The last declarative mood of the above quotation indicates that Ramatoulaye is not supportive of the levirate custom and that she is not ready to go for it. It then becomes crystal clear why she has not made use of any modalization anywhere in both extracts. In fact her position against that retrograde appalling Hebrew custom, today admitted all around the world, known as levirate is firm. There is no probability, no possibility to get her to change her mind over the question. That is why despite Farmata's menaces and curses which are expressive of keen materialism in the five other remaining modulations in the second excerpt, Ramatoulaye has not moved an inch in her stand against Daouda's love advances which she judges fair. The author has molded such a character in Ramatoulaye to show her clear cut stand against the social practices of levirate that tend to downgrade, humiliate and reify women. Undeniably, Mariama Bâ is certainly calling women to join her to block the way to the traditions and customs that regress women in the society, which in fact is a clue of her African feminism.

In other respects, when, in the following modulated declarative mood, Ramatoulaye, the narrator of the story in the studied texts says: "This time I shall speak out. My voice has known thirty years of silence, thirty years of harassment. It bursts out, violent, sometimes sarcastic, sometimes contemptuous." she encodes very deep meanings about African women's sufferings on the sly. Actually, many African women silently undergo unbearable situations in their marital relationships with both their husbands and in-laws. Owing to a number of some strongly rooted African customs and traditions, many of them dare not speak out lest they should be regarded as badly educated women and rejected by their societies. Some wicked men profit of the situation to ill-treat their wives. Only a few courageous among the suffering women like Ramatoulaye sometimes succeed in voicing their sufferings out when overwhelmed. The linguistic encoding of the modulated declarative mood is a call by Mariama Bâ, the author of the novel, to all African women to get out of their hideout and silence and voice out their various sufferings. It's at the same time her feministic trend to take revenge over the wicked men that abuse of and perpetually ill-treat women.

The modal adjuncts viz. the mood adjuncts, the polarity and vocative adjuncts recorded in both excerpts have been used to add interpersonal meanings that are to some extent connected to the creation and maintenance of the dialogue between Tamsir and Ramatoulaye in the first excerpt and between Daouda Dieng, Farmata and Ramatoulaye in the second one. Moreover, the mood adjuncts of usuality expression 'never' have been predominantly used by Ramatoulaye to emphasize the impossibility of any wedding plan between her and Tamsir no matter how much supported that plan is by the customs of their society. The mood adjuncts patterns of the excerpts are revelatory of the author's strong desire to get that social practice of levirate stopped. Through the total insubordination of the persona designed for that purpose namely Ramatoulaye, the author aims at setting up a new line of conduct that frees widows from the bondage of appalling levirate traditions and customs. Vocative adjuncts on the other hand have not been reciprocally used among the personae in the excerpts. This reveals that power among them is unequal.

Circumstantial adjuncts have the upper hand over all the other types of adjuncts recorded in the studied excerpts. They have been used to add experiential content to the studied texts. They convey meanings about the time and place of the events narrated in the excerpts, their agents and beneficiaries.

The large number of the conjunctive adjuncts in the excerpts tells about the organization of the texts. Indeed, they function to provide linking words between the clauses of the texts and their paragraphs. In both excerpts, conjunctions have been used to express different meanings. Some namely “and, also, but” have been used to express the logical meanings of extension that is to say a relationship of addition where some sentences add to the meanings made in others. Others especially “then, while, and before that” have been used by the writer to express the logical conjunctive relation of enhancement whereby some sentences in the excerpts extend on the meanings of others in terms of time and concession dimensions. Actually there has been just one conjunctive relation of elaboration established by the conjunction “that is to say” used by Tamsir to clarify when he desires his wedding project to take place. The conjunctive adjuncts as used through the studied texts have unveiled the way the writer Mariama Bâ has created and expressed logical relationships between the clauses, the sentences and the different parts of the studied texts for them to be well written, readable and all-inclusive.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the interpersonal meanings in two sample texts culled from Mariama Bâ's novel entitled *So Long A Letter*. In fact there are so many deep meanings encoded in the writer's above pinpointed novel that it is not just enough to read her novel to pretend to have understood the various messages she endeavors to get across. Linguistic theories application to her text would help get further to the depth of her writing. The study at hand comes in as a response to such need for better meanings digging out from the novel via the systemic linguistic examination of two extracts from it under the spotlight of the interpersonal meaning theory. The key objective of this article is to find out how meanings have been encoded through the mood patterns of the selected excerpts in order to unveil the author's perspectives about the social questions raised therein. To attain this, the mixed quantitative and qualitative methodology has been appealed to. Via the quantitative method, the statistics of the analysis carried out have been drawn up to show the different numbers of mood types, modality and adjunct types distinctively. The qualitative method that ensued has, on the other hand, allowed to get to the core meanings encoded via the described mood patterns of the studied texts. Interestingly the research has arrived at impressive results. Among several other findings, the large numbers of declarative moods that override the other types of mood in the overall analysis together with the interrogative moods indicate that information has been largely exchanged. Indeed, the overall mood patterns of the studied excerpts have helped reveal their field register variable around which the exchange of information has gone round: love, what it is, what it is not and what it ought to be. The linguistic features of the speech roles of giving and demanding as taken on by the interactants in the excerpts depict the sad true life reality that what matters for people's fellow creatures after the former ones' death is their material belongings left behind. In other respects, the modulated interrogative moods, the imperative moods and the vocative adjuncts as used in both studied excerpts have uncovered their tenor dimension of unequal power, frequent contact and low affective involvement. Besides, modulations have been used to argue about the obligation or inclination of proposals. As such, they are unmarked modality choices that the writer has used to pass her judgments on the awkwardness of the traditional and customary prescriptions that almost reify women in some societies. Indeed, some of the modulated declarative moods as used in the studied texts are revelatory of Mariama Bâ's African feministic trend to take revenge over the wicked men that abuse of and perpetually ill-treat women. To round off, investigating both the experiential and textual meaning in the same studied texts would undoubtedly add to the meanings arrived at in this article for as Halliday (1985a, 1985b) argued, language, whether spoken or written, is structured to make three main kinds of meanings simultaneously: the interpersonal meaning, the experiential and textual meanings..

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Appendices

Mood analysis keys:

S= Subject, F=Finite, Fn=negative, Fms=modalized, Fml=modulated

P=predicator, Pml=modulated Predicator, Pmlc= Modulated complex, Pms=modalised Predicator, F/P=fused Finite and Predicator.

C=Complement, Ca=attributive Complement.

A=Adjunct, Ac=circumstantial, Am=mood, Ao=comment, Ap=polarity, Av=vocative,

Aj=conjunctive, At=continuity, Wh=wh element; Wh/S, Wh/C, WhAc=fused Wh element

Mn=minor clause

Excerpt N01

1. Yesterday (Ac), I (S) celebrated (F/P) 2. as (Aj) is (Finite) the custom(C), the fortieth day(C) of Modal's death(C).3 I(S) have(F) forgiven(P) him(C). 4 May(Fms) God(S) hear(P) the prayer(C) 5 I(S) say(F/P) for him(C) every day(Ac) . 7 I(S) celebrated(F/P) the fortieth day(C) in meditation(Ac). 8 The initiated(S) read(F/P) the Koran(C). 9 Their fervent voices(S) rose(F/P) towards heaven(Ac).10 Modou Fall(Av), may(Fms) God(S) accept(P) you(C) among his chosen few(C).11 After(Ac) going(F/P) through the notions of piety(C), 12 Tamsir(S) came(F/P) 13 and(Aj) sat(F/P) in my bedroom(Ac) in the blue armchair(Ac) 14 that(S) used(F/P) to be(F) your favorite(C). 15 Sticking(F/P)his head(C) outside(Ac), 16 he(S) signaled(F/P) to Mawdo(Ac); 17 he(S) also(Aj) signaled(F/P)to the Imam(Ac) from the mosque(Ac) in his area(Ac).18 The Imam and Mawdo(S) joined(F/P) him(C) 19 . 20 This time(Ac), Tamsir(S) speaks(F/P): 21 there(S) is(F) a striking resemblance(C) between Modou(C) and(Aj) Tamsir(C) , 22 the same tics(S) donated(F/P) by the inexplicable law(Ac) of heredity(Ac). 23 Tamsir(S) speaks(F/P) with great assurance(Ac); 24 he(S) touches(F/P), one again, on my years of marriage(C), then(Aj) 25 he(S) concludes(F/P) : 26 "when(Ac) you(S) have(F) come out(P) 27 that(S) is(F) to say(P), of mourning(C)), 28 I(S) shall(Fml) marry(P) you(C). 29 You(S) suit(F/P) me(C) as(Ac) a wife(C), and(Aj) further(Aj), 30 you(S) will(Fml) continue to live(P) here(Ac), just(Am) as if(Aj) 31 Modou(S) were not(Fn) dead(P). 32 Usually (Am), it(S) is(F) the young brother(c) 33 who(S) inherits(F/P) his elder brother's wife(C). 34 In this case (Ac), it(S) is (F) the opposite(C). 35 You(S) are (F) my good luck(C). 36 I(S) shall (Fml) marry (P) you(C). 37 I(S) prefer (F/P) you to the other one(C), too frivolous (Ca), too young (Ca). 38 I(S) advised (F/P) Modou(C) against that marriage(C). 39 " What(Wh/C) a declaration of love(C), full of conceit(C), in a house(Ac) still(Aj) in mourning(C). 40 What(Wh/C) assurance(C) and(Aj) calm aplomb(C)! 41 I(S) look(F/P) Tamsir(C) straight in the eyes(Ac). 42 I(S) look (F/P) at the Mawdo(C). 43 I(S)Iook(F/P) at the Imam(C). 44 I(S) draw (F/P) my black shawl closer(C). 45 I(S) tell (F/P) my beads(C). 46 This time (Ac) I(S) shall (Fml) speak out(P). 47 My voice(S) has (F) known (F) thirty years of silence(C), thirty years of harassment(C). 48 It(S) bursts out (F/P), violent (Ca), sometimes(Am) sarcastic(Ca), sometimes(Am) contemptuous(Ca). 49 "Did(F) you(S) ever have(P) any affection(C) for your brother(Ac)? 50 Already (Ac) you(S) want to build(F/Pmlc) a new home(C) for yourself(Ac), over a body(Ac) 51 that(S) is(F) still warm(Ca). 52 While(Aj) we(S) were(F) praying(P) for Modou(Ac), 53 you(S) are(F) thinking(P) of future wedding festivities(Ca). 54 "Ah, yes(mn)! 55 Your strategy(S) is(F) to get in(F/P) before(Ac) any other suitor(C), 56 to get in(F/P) before(Ac) Mawdo, the faithful friend(C), 57 who(S) has(F/P) more qualities(C) than you(Ac) 58 and(Aj) also according to(Aj) the custom(C), can(Fml) inherit(P) the wife(C). 59 You(S) forgot(F/P) that(Aj) 60 I(S) have(F/P) a heart, a mind(C), that(Aj) 61 I(S) am not (Fn) an object(C) to be(F) passed(P) from hand to hand(Ac). 62 You(S) don't(Fn) know(P) 63 what(Wh/C) marriage means to me(Ac): 64 it(S) is(F) an act of faith(Ac) and(Aj) of love(Ac), the total surrender of oneself(C) to the person(Ac) 65 one(S) has(F) chosen(P) 66and(Aj) who(S) has(F) chosen(P) you(C) "(67 I(S) emphasized(F/P) the word 'chosen(C)'. 68 What(Wh/C) of your wives(Ac), Tamsir(Av)? 69 Your income(S) can (Fml) meet (P) neither their needs nor those of your numerous children(C). 70To help(P) you (C) out with your financial obligations(Ac), 71 one of your wives(S) dyes(F/P), 72 another(S) sells(F/P) fruit(C), 73 the third(S) untiringly(Am) turns(F/P) the handle(C) of her sewing machine(Ac). 74 You(S), the revered lord (Av), you(S) take(F/P) it easy(Ca), 75 obeyed at the other crook of a finger(Ac). 75 I(S) shall (Fml) never(Am) be(F) the one(Ac) to complete(F/P) your collection(C). 76 My house(S) shall(Fml) never(Am) be(F) for you(C) the coveted oasis(Ca) : 77 no extra burden(Ac) ; my "turn"(C) every day(Ac); cleanliness(C) and(Aj) luxury , abundance(C) and(Aj) calm(C)! 78 No(Ap),

Tamsir(Av)! 79 And(Aj) then(Aj) there(S) are(F) Daba and her husband(Ac), 80 who(Wh/S) have(F) demonstrated(P) their financial acumen(Ca) 81 by buying up(F/P) all your brother's properties(C). 82 What(Wh/C) promotion for you(Ac)! 83 Your friends(S) are (F) going to look at (P) you with envy (Ac) in their eyes (Ac). 84 Mawdo(S) signaled (F/P) with his hand(Ac) to stop(P). 85 "Shut up(F/P)! 86 Shut up(F/P)! 87 Stop(P)! 88 Stop(P)! 90 " But(Aj) you(S) can't(Fnml) stop(P) 91 once(Ac) you(S) have(F) let(P) your anger(C) loose(Ca). 92 I(S) concluded(F/P), more violent than ever(Ac): 93 Tamsir(Av), purge(F/P) yourself (Ac)of your dreams of conquest(C). 94 They(S) have(F) lasted(P) forty days(Ac). 95 I(S) shall(Fml) never(Am) be(F) your wife(C). 96 "The Imam(S) prayed(F/P) God(C) to be(F) his witness(C). 97 "Such profane words(Ac) and(Aj) still in mourning(Ac)!" 98 Tamsir(S) got up(F/P) without a word(Ac). 99 He(S) understood((F/P) fully(Am) that(Aj) 100 he(S)'d(F) been defeated(P). 101 Thus(Aj) I(S) took(F/P) my revenge(C) for that other day when(Ac) 102 all three of them(S) had(F) airily(Am) informed(P) me(C) of the marriage of Modou Fall and(Aj) Binetou(Ac)

Excerpt N02

1 You(S) are (F) chasing after(P) a woman(C) 2 who(S) has(F) remained(P) the same(C), Daouda(Av), despite(Aj) the intense ravage of suffering(C). 3 You(S) have (F) loved (P) me(C), 4 who(S) love (P) me still(Ac). 5 I(S) don't(Fn) doubt(P) it(C). 6 Try(F/P) to understand(P) me(C). 7 My conscience(S) is not(Fn) accommodating(P) enough(Am) to enable(P) me(C) to marry(F/P) you(C), 8 when(Ac) only esteem(S), justified(F/P) by your many qualities(Ac), pulls(F/P) me(C) towards you(Ac). 9 I(S) can (Fml) offer (P) you(C) nothing else(C), 10 even though (Aj) you(S) deserve(F/P) everything(C). 11 Esteem(S) is not(Fn) enough for marriage(Ac), whose(Aj) snares(C) 12 I(S) know(F/P) from experience(Ac). 13 And then(Aj) the existence of your wife and children(S) further(Aj) complicates(F/P) the situation(C). 14 Abandoned(P) yesterday(Ac) because of (Aj) a woman(C), 15 I(S) cannot(Fnml) lightly(Ac) bring(F/P) myself(C) between(Aj) you and your family(C). 16 You(S) think(F/P) the problem(S) of polygamy(Ac) is (F) a simple one(Ca). 17 Those who(S) are(F) involved(P) in it(C) know(F/P) the constraints, the lies, the injustice(C) that(S) weigh down(F/P) their consciences(C) in return for the ephemeral joys of change(Ca). 18 I(S) am(F) sure(Ca) 2 you(S) are(F) motivated(P) by love(Ac), a love(S) 21 that(Aj) existed(F/P) well before(Ac) your marriage(C) and(Aj) 22 that fate(S) has not(Fn) been able(P) to satisfy(F/P). 23 It(S) is(F) with infinite sadness(Ac) and(Aj) tear-filled eyes(Ca) that(Aj) 24 I(S) offer(F/P) you my friendship(C). 25 Dear Daouda(Av), please accept(F/P)it(C). 26 It(S) is(F) with great pleasure(Ac) that(Aj) 27 I(S) shall(Fml) continue to welcome(P) you(C) to my house(Ac). 28 Shall (Fml) I(S) hope to see (P) you(C) again (Ac)? 29 Farmata,(S) who(Aj) had(F) smiled in handing over(P) her letter(C), told(P) me(C) how(Ac) her smile(S) soured(F/P) on her face(Ac) as(Aj) 30 Daouda(S) read(F/P). 31 Then(Aj) instinct and observation(S) brought(F/P) a look of sadness(C) to her face(Ac), for(Aj) 32 Daouda(S), wrinkled(F/P) his eyebrows(C), creased(F/P) his forehead(C), bit(F/P) his lips(C) and(Aj) sighed(F/P). 33 Daouda(S) put down(F/P) my letter(C). 34 Calmly (Ac), he(S) stuffed (F/P) an envelope(C) with a wad of blue notes (Ac). 35 He(S) scrawled(F/P) on a piece of paper(Ac) the terrible words(C) 36 that(Aj) had(F) separated(P) us(C) before(Ac) and(Aj) that(Aj) 37 he(S) had(F) acquired(P) during his medical course(Ac) :38. "All or nothing Adieu (mn)."

39 Aissatou(Av), Daouda Dieng(Av) never(Ac) came back(F/P) again(Ac). 40 Bissimilal!(mn) 41 Bissimilal!(mn) 42 What(Wh/C) was(F) it(S) you(S) dared to write(P) and(Aj) make(P) me(C) messenger on(P)? 43 You(S) have (F) killed (P) a man(C). 44 His crestfallen face(S) cried it out (F/P) to me (Ac). 45 You(S) have (F) rejected (P) the messenger(C) sent (P) to you (Ac) by God (Ac) to reward (F/P) you(C) for your sufferings(Ac). 46 God(S) will(Fml) punish(P) you(C) for not having(Fn) followed(P) the path towards peace(C). 47 You(S) have(F) refused(P) greatness(C)! 48 You(S) shall(Fml) live(P) in mud(Ac). 49 I(S) wish(F/P) you(C) another Modou(C) to make(F) you shed(P) tears of blood(C). 50 Who(Wh/C) do(F) you take(P) yourself for(Ac)? 51 At fifty(Ac), you(S) have(F) dared to break(P) the wolere(C). 52 You(S) trample(F/P) upon your luck(Ac): Daouda Dieng(Av), a rich man, a deputy, a doctor(Ca), of your own age group(C), with just one wife(Ac). 53 He(S) offers (F/P) you(C) security, love(C), and(Aj) 54 you(S) refuse(F/P)! 55 Many women(S), of Daba's age(C) even(Aj), would(Fms) wish(P) to be(F) in your place(Ac). 56 "You(S) boast(F/P) of reasons(C). 57 You(S) speak (F/P) of love(C) instead of (Aj) bread(C). 58 Madame(S) wants(F/P) her heart(C) to miss(F/P) a beat(C). 59 Why(Wh/C) not flowers(C), just(Am) like in the films(Ca)? 60 "Bissimilal!(mn) 61 Bissimilal!(mn) 62 You(S) so withered(Ca), 63 you(S) want(F) to choose(Pmlc) a husband(C)like(Aj) an eighteen-year-old girl(Ca). 64 Life(S) will(Fml) spring(F/P) a surprise(C) on you(Ac) 65 and(Aj) then(Aj), Ramatoulaye(Av), you(S) will(Fml) beat(P) your fingers(C). 66 I(S) don't (Fn) know (P) what (Wh/C) 67 Daouda(S) has (F) written (P). 68 But (Aj) there(S) is (F) money(C) in the envelope (Ac). 69 He(S) is(F) a true samba linguere(C) from the olden days(Ac). 70 May (Fms) God(S) satisfy (P), gratify (P) Daouda Dieng(Av). 71 My heart(S) is (F) with him (Ac). 72 "Such(S) was(F) Farmata's tirade(Ac) on her return from her mission(Ac). 73 She(S) thoroughly (Am) upset (F/P) me(C). 74 The truth of this woman, a childhood companion(S) through the long association of our families(C), could not(Fnms) hold(P) good for me(Ac),

even(Aj) in its logic of concern(C)... 75 Once more(Ac), I(S) was(F) refusing(P) the easy way(Ca) because of (Aj) my ideal(C). 76 I(S) went back (F/P) to my loneliness (Ac), 77 which, (Aj) a momentary flash(Ca) had(F) brightened(P) briefly(Ac). 78 I(S) wore(F/P) it(C) again(Ac), as(Aj) 79 one(S) wears(F/P) a familiar garment(C). 80 Its cut(S) suited (F/P) me well (Ac). 81 I(S) moved (F/P) easily (Ac) in it (Ac), despite (Aj) Farmata(C). 82 I(S) wanted (F/P) something else(C). 83 And (Aj) this "something else"(S) was(F) impossible without the full agreement of my heart(Ac).