
Critical Discourse Analysis: Narratives of Gender-Based Violence Victims in Bamenda-Cameroon

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ABSTRACT: *Gendered roles ascribed to members of society form the basis for their acceptance or rejection in that society. Whether subtle or overt violence, the effects are far-reaching and traumatizing on the victims, be they women, men, or children. This is obvious in discourses revealed in narratives of the violated. The questions asked are; how do the violated express themselves? What are the causes and effects of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and how can it be curbed in society? Since language is a powerful instrument used in communicating feelings and thoughts especially, the language used in narratives surrounding domestic abuse forms the data for this paper. Data was collected from 29 participants between the ages of 25 and 50, using ethnographic approaches, particularly semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The theoretical bases were Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model which dwells on Description, Interpretation, and Explanation and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics with a focus on the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions. The analysis revealed that illiteracy, ignorance, dependency and poverty as some of the causes of GBV. Additionally, the analysis revealed that language patterns in transitivity are used by the victims in their struggle to maintain emotional balance and fight the existing cultural and societal stereotypes concerning how gender and sexuality affect their mental health. This paper, therefore, recommends the creation of safe spaces to enable victims of domestic violence to express their trauma and find healing in the process of narration.*

KEYWORDS: gender, inequality, violence, narratives, CDA, SFL.

INTRODUCTION

Violence is inherently linked to power; therefore, power imbalances create perpetual violence. It may be exercised on a man or a woman, however, in our society, we usually have women being violated. Domestic violence is intentional and designed to achieve power control over the subordinate in society. It takes place between intimate partners. Either women or men can

be perpetrators or victims under domestic violence. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a harmful act directed at an individual based on their gender. It refers to psychological, physical, or sexual harm committed against an individual against their will and stems from societies or environments that promote gender inequality, where masculinity is perceived as superior to femininity and where patriarchy is encouraged (Tazoacha et al., 2022). Tazoacha et al. (2022) go on to quote 1948 Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that 'No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.' It can include sexual, physical, mental, and economic harm inflicted in public or in private. It includes threats of violence, coercion, and manipulation (unhcr.org/gender-based-violence.html). GBV can include domestic violence against women, men, and children living in the same domestic unit. However, women and girls are especially vulnerable to violence as cultural norms and attitudes towards gender inequality are disadvantageous to women. This inequality portrays a power imbalance in a patriarchal society, where the man has the power. Brun (2020) connects gender inequalities (denying equal rights and opportunities) to vulnerability. Collins (1998) posits that international research has consistently revealed that women are more vulnerable to being assaulted, injured, raped or killed by a current or ex-partner.

According to Tazoacha et al. (2022), though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948 Art 5) pronouncement seems progressive and convincing on paper, this has not been the reality for women and girls in many countries, Cameroon inclusive. Women in Cameroon experience high levels of discrimination, despite constitutional provisions recognizing human rights. Moussi (2020) states that the constitution of Cameroon affirms women, a right to life, physical and moral integrity, and humane treatment in all circumstances. He cites Brun (2020) who posits that 43.2% of women in Cameroon faced domestic violence.

In her article, Muluh (2020) looks at gender conflicts in Santa, Cameroon, from the perspective of the patriarchal land system in Cameroon. According to her, many rural women in Santa do not have land rights in practical terms due to the unjust customary values and the reliance system. She further explains that the power vested in traditional authorities only tends to favor men since women cannot be chiefs. Fomukong (2023) in her analysis of *The Locks on My Lips* concludes that discourse construes society and culture with hidden ideologies. This is seen through the author's presentation of a woman fighting to have a land certificate in a rural setting in Cameroon. One might be tempted to think that it is only at the rural areas where women suffer but at the national level, leadership positions in Cameroon, are mostly held by the men. In Cameroon today, the President, Prime Minister, President of Parliament, President of the Senate, and 119 (66%) of 180 parliamentarians are men. At the regional and divisional levels, out of 10 governors, none is a woman, of the 58 Senior Divisional Officers, only 2 are women, and as of 2019, only 8 out of 360 Divisional Officers are women (Nsodzefe, 2019). In the State Universities, out of 10 Rectors/Vice Chancellors, only 2 are women. According to Atanga (2021), gender ideologies ascribe dominance and powerful positions to men and subservient social positions to women. Men in this dispensation are at the top and therefore think women are a subclass that men can toss around or can keep, locked up in the backyard- the reason for more women being violated. There are laws in Cameroon that equate women to men, and

Cameroon is a signatory of gender equality laws. In addition, there is a ministry of women's empowerment in Cameroon but the implementation of gender equality measures is a problem. Atanga (2021) goes on to argue that women in Cameroon face barriers to attaining leadership positions in both the physical and ideological spaces, where the physical spaces consist of leadership positions within organizations and ideological spaces are the principles that steer decision-making within those positions. This power imbalance creates opportunities for men to violate women and this is obvious in the way the women tell their stories and the choices they make in language.

Language is an embodiment of meaning-making, which involves social actors. Therefore, to make meaning out of a piece of information, the roles of the addressee and addresser, the setting, the purpose, the medium and other contextual aspects are taken into consideration. This is better understood through Halliday and Hasan (1985) who are interested in the procedures of a text to make meaning. According to Bloor and Bloor (2004), the text either spoken or written, communicates meaningful messages and has a purposeful context. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) posit that a text is an instance of the language in any medium that makes sense to someone who knows the language. To get textual cues that reveal meanings construed in a text, the social purpose of the text, the 'goings-on', the orientation of the writer or speaker, the social roles of participants and the organization of information are all considered.

Language is the major tool in Discourse Analysis, which analyzes words, phrases, clauses and sentences for ideological purposes rather than just describing grammar. It also analyzes the communicative aims of genres and the impact of non-verbal communication and multimodal discourses. Discourse Analysis, therefore, takes account of language choices in a text and its relation to the social and cultural contexts. It emphasizes a broader use of language within and or between groups of people. It examines power relations in society such as racism, gender, subjugated people and many others that originate from inequality. Inequality, therefore, is one of the major concerns of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and patriarchy is a breeding ground for gender inequality leading to GBV. CDA discusses language, power and ideology and analyzes how language reflects the inequalities and social imbalances of power amongst groups in the society. Power deals with the control of members of a group over another group based on privileged access to wealth, knowledge, position, income, force, information, authority, discourse, and other scarce societal resources (Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2015). Fairclough and Wodak (1997) describe CDA as addressing social problems, meaning CDA focuses on both language use and socio-cultural processes; how social relations of power are exercised and negotiated in discourse and how language use makes its contribution to produce and transform societies and cultures, consisting of relations of power. CDA also studies spoken and written texts and aims to understand how language is used in real-life situations relating to history, society, politics, and how beliefs, values, and assumptions are communicated and how culture, rules, and conventions communicate (Luo, 2022). Van Dijk (2015) argues that CDA is a type of discourse analysis that primarily studies the way social-power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts. The social conditions in which the text is produced affect the text. Generally, the CDA intends to destabilize systems of power and oppression. This paper uses CDA

approaches to examine a group of people- women who have undergone domestic violence in Bamenda, in the North West Region of Cameroon, where a patriarchal system operates. The study identifies causes of violence through discourses and the discursive strategies used in the narratives to express their pain.

Theoretical Considerations

The theories used as a basis for this paper are M.A.K.Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics and Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Three-Dimensional Model of Norman Fairclough

Fairclough's three-dimensional model for CDA is a complex and interrelated relationship between texts, discourse and society. According to Fairclough, the text requires a Description (textual analysis), an Interpretation (Discourse practices), and an Explanation (social analysis). The Description includes the lexical, graphological, grammatical, and phonological aspects of the text. In interpreting the text according to Fairclough, one is processing the analysis. At this stage, the analyst discusses what is going on, the actors involved, the relationship and the part of language unraveling power relations. The Explanation includes the relation of the text with social structures of authority, and the unequal power relations in the society producing the text. This is the authoritative, repressive and patriarchal ideology in the society. As Janks (2005) puts it, texts are instantiations of socially regulated discourses and the processes of production and reception are socially constrained. Analyzing discourse using Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model means analyzing language use in the wider society including the production and interpretation of texts and social practices.

Systemic Functional Linguistics by M. A. K. Halliday

Systemic functional Linguistics is a theory of language analysis developed by Halliday. According to Halliday (2014), this framework is used for analyzing the clause to make meaning through the choices of language the speaker makes. Darani (2014, p. 185) argues that texts are not simply there but are infused with ideologies and agendas. The choices writers or speakers make are therefore embedded with ideologies. This notion of grammar is beyond the traditional view of grammar in which language is a set of rules for specifying grammatical structures (Sadighi, 2008). In Systemic Functional Linguistics, language is viewed in four strata. The first is the register which is made up of the field (what is going on); the tenor (what are the social roles played by the participants); and the Mode (which is the medium of expression). The second stratum is the context of situation (Semantic component). This stratum has three metafunctions: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. The third stratum is the lexicogrammatical stratum that takes into consideration the grammar and vocabulary and the fourth is the phonology and graphology stratum that analyzes the sound system, the writing system, and the wording system. This study focuses on the semantic component.

The semantic component is about the ideational function, which constructs ideas and experiences. It is used to express content and communicate information. This function is further subdivided into transitivity and ergativity. The second is the interpersonal function that constructs role and power dynamics (Norquist). This function is made up of the mood and the

modal. It maintains the relationship between the participants. The last is the textual function which manages the flow of information. This function is divided into the thematic structure (theme and rheme) and the information structure (New and Given). This research focuses on transitivity (in the ideational function), mood, and modality (in the interpersonal).

Transitivity is about capturing reality in terms of processes (or goings-on) like doing and happening, and looks at the grammar of experience. These processes constitute the transitivity system of language, which explores how language construes the experiences of the participants in the world. Transitivity further explores the ideology behind the text as depicted in the choices made by the speaker or writer. The focus here is on the representation of the clause in the form of processes that represent actions, speeches, states of mind, or states of being, and surrounded by participants and circumstances. The processes are realized by a verb group, the participants by a noun group, and the circumstance by an adverb group or a prepositional phrase. Halliday identifies six processes, which are Material, Behavioral, Verbal, Relational, Mental, and Existential.

To know a material process, one can ask questions like 'What did the Actor do' or 'What happened'. It describes what an entity does to another. The mental process has to do with affection, cognition, and perception. It involves expressing senses and hidden ideologies (Khan et al., 2021). The verbal process includes all modes of expressing and indicating; it can be verbal such as showing or otherwise. It construes 'saying' and deals with how participants exchange ideas or their experiences. The existential process involves existential constructions and the typical verb here is 'be'. The experience is stated in verbs like exit, occur, and arise. The relational process is concerned with being, possessing, or becoming. In this process, the participants share some kind of relations. The behavioral process is a hybrid of the material and mental processes. This is because it includes both action and thinking, and construes both the psychological and the physiological processes.

Mood and modality are aspects of interpersonal function. The mood is a system of the clause (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004) in which the speaker selects a role. They choose from two options. The speaker chooses either the indicative mood or the imperative mood. The indicative mood warrants the speaker to make statements or elicit information from the hearer. The speech functions of the indicative mood are declarative and interrogative. In the declarative mood, the speaker makes statements and gives information. In the interrogative mood, the speaker asks questions to solicit information. This can be done in many ways such as Wh-questions, yes/no questions, tag questions, and even rhetorical questions (where the answer remains with the listener). The imperative mood is an interpersonal function in which the speaker takes a more authoritative role using commands to persuade listeners to do something.

Modality expresses the feelings of the speaker, personal thoughts, and attitudes. It is divided into modalisation (proposition) which is realized through probability and usuality; and modulation (proposal) which is realized through obligation and inclination. According to Rui and Jingxia (2018), probability refers to how likely the information being exchanged is true; usuality is how frequently the information being exchanged is true; obligation is the

responsibility or pressure imposed on the addressee to meet the addresser's demand; and inclination is the speaker's willingness or readiness to fulfill an offer.

There is an exercise of power in the relationship between a husband and a wife when it comes to domestic violence. In the narratives of violated persons, language use portrays the exercise of power. From this background, we are going to discuss the patterns of language in the narratives of domestically violated women and the meanings we can make of them, to get the hidden ideologies.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The discussion in this section analyzes the linguistic elements through transitivity, mood, and modality, and discourses through thematic coding that reveal underlying ideologies.

Discourses

Fairclough (2003) sees discourses as ways of representing aspects of the world: the processes, relations, and structures of the material world, the mental world of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and the social world. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) focus on the transitivity processes to show how language is used in construing human experiences as a path to the meaning-making process in our everyday lives - in this case, the narratives of victims of domestic abuse. The discourses identified in the narratives are discourses of culture, education, abuse and separation.

Discourse of Culture

Gender concerning culture is seen as the psychological, social, and cultural differences between man and woman; it is something acquired or constructed through relationships with others and adherence to certain cultural norms and prescriptions. According to Bagozzi et al. (1999), culture and gender interact to produce fundamentally different patterns of association between positive and negative emotions. In the context of domestic abuse, the victims' discourses present ascribed roles and culture as the base for the overt or subtle acceptance of domestic abuse especially if the perpetrator is male. The narrative below presents a picture of hegemonic acceptance of domestic abuse from the lens of culture, gender, and the community.

My husband often told me that he bought me with his money so I have no right to refuse to have sex when he wants to. So I will just lie there or he will force his way through which he often did. I really could not complain to anybody because it was embarrassing. When I even tried to open up to older women at some point they said, that is how men are.

The use of the verbal and relational processes that describe the callousness of the perpetrator and the state of being of the victim *told me, have no right, I will just lie there, it was embarrassing, that is how men are*, show the role played by culture in the subtle acceptance of domestic abuse. The description dimension is the experiential value in which the text producer's experience of the natural and social world is represented through the content (Ghazali, 2007). The narrator's awareness of the reaction of the social world concerning a

woman, sexually abused by her husband, informs her inability to complain. The gendered roles and environment are macro influencers of domestic violence. Looking at the certainty expressed in the mood structure with an emphasis represented by the presence of the adverb *really* in *I really could not complain to anybody*, marks the degree of influence that ascribes gender roles in our cultural settings and encourages the continuation of domestic abuse toward the female.

The interpretation aspect of Fairclough's Three-dimensions of CDA looks at the analysis of the cognitive process of the participant and their interactions. The mental process showing the world of consciousness of the participant are exemplified in cognitive, perceptive, and emotive processes; *they see, you know, who feels*. The material process indicating a happening in the clause *'I grew up in a family where domestic violence was normal'* followed by explanations people may have for abusing others based on upbringing, show the certainty with which this participant defends the fact that ascribed gender roles are the bedrock of most domestic violence. This is justified in her use of these clauses: 1) *...feels that a man is supposed to punch or slap a lady when disrespected*, 2) *...who feels that a man is superior to a woman*. The choice of modality expressed in clause 1 removes a certain degree of responsibility from the abusive person and shifts it to the growing up process. The following narrative equally places the subject at the mercy of culture.

I was 12 years old when my parents sent me off to marriage to an older man. I didn't like the idea because I really wanted to continue going to school. But in my culture, once your parents decide, there is nothing you can do about it. So I had no choice in the matter and getting married meant automatically no more school for me.

The use of the relational process *I was 12 years old* to begin the narrative which is also strengthened by the description of the context backed by the use of negation in *I didn't like the idea* shows the focus of the victim is her helplessness in the face of a culture that is destroying the young rather than empowering them. The predominant use of negation in clauses like *I didn't, there is nothing, I had no choice, no more school* are representations of actions that give birth to a series of effects that destroy the individual involved. The victim is presenting an argument that polarizes her and other children of her age against her parents, and the older man (her late husband) representing a generation that perpetuates biased gender roles and a culture that trap young girls and like her, most girls only get their freedom when the man dies. The use of the active voice in *...my parents sent me off to marriage to an older man* positions the parents as Actors in the material clause deliberately taking decisions that will ruin the future of the goal (me) in that clause. The victim is therefore looking at the Actor (her parents) as active participants in her journey of domestic abuse. The argumentative strategy used in the clause *I really wanted to go to school* shows the victim's position concerning those who did not think that education was good for her. This polarization expressed through the desiderative mental process positions her family and late husband as advocates of the culture that destroys the educational ambitions of young girls.

Another participant before getting into the details of her narrative, points to the active participatory role of culture in nurturing a conducive atmosphere for domestic abuse states:

Based on our culture as an African woman, being a woman in the African context kind of creates a favorable climate for domestic violence because an African woman is trained that it is all right if a man beats her. Sometimes it can be a sign of love and sometimes, well, it is her husband, so she should not complain. It is even right if the man violates her sexually. They don't even consider that a violation because it is her husband's right, so there is no issue... Some men go through domestic abuse but permit me once you are a woman and in a relationship it creates a very favorable environment in that you can be violated

The victim uses her experience of the natural world, her lived experiences to give a picture of the way domestic abuse especially sexual violation of a wife is perceived. This experiential perspective is brought using the material process, which represents happenings and doings. The material process expressed using the passive voice in 'An African woman is trained' without mentioning who trains the African woman presupposes that living in this context or being born in this context comes with a subconscious acceptance of abuse on the part of the African woman especially if it is coming from her spouse. The use of the existential clause in referring to men who go through domestic abuse is immediately countered with the use of *but* indicating a difference as in what the man faces cannot be compared with what the woman faces. This narrative touches on the establishment of the hierarchy of power which is confirmed by naming practices. When she says *as an African woman, a woman in the African context, an African woman is trained, once you are a woman...* the label *Africa* that is attached to *woman* each time shows the particular type of woman and projects the hegemonic discourses surrounding the supremacy of the man.

Discourse of Education

The discourse of education as expressed by the participants in this study does not concern the system of going to a formal setting to acquire academic knowledge for professional purposes only. This also has to do with the sensitization of the communities and individuals, the creation of awareness regarding the disadvantages of ignorance when it comes to understanding what domestic abuse consists of, as well as what being empowered can do and or contribute to the psychological and economic empowerment of a victim. The narratives show clear indications of a sense of dignity that is restored as a result of both engaging in education that empowers the victim to fend for themselves and the creation of awareness that clarifies the concept of abuse.

If I knew then, what I know now, I may not have gone through what I went through. When you complain to anybody, they tell you to persevere... but I will not encourage anybody to accept to live under that kind of atmosphere...it is bad (Doris)

After observing a year of mourning as tradition required, I enrolled in an adult literacy class. I have been meeting other people since then and it has healed me a lot (Nafissatou)

Creating awareness is important so that victims can be able to stay away from situations that can victimize them. This is so because before it happens, there are usually signals that begin with a certain degree of tension... (Barrister)

The narratives of the participants above show their experiences in the natural world which is portrayed in the intertextuality surrounding the texts. Narratives one and three bother around the importance of education as sensitization while narrative two focuses on the power of education as economic empowerment and social interaction. The use of conditionals coupled with the cognitive mental process in *if I knew what I know now* expresses a degree of regret showing the increase in suffering that stems from the ignorance of not knowing how to handle abuse and where to go to. The modal expression *I may not have gone through what I went through* though an expression of probability indicates a chance of surviving or averting the abuse which ignorance did not as much provide. This modal expression shows that with awareness the victim has a choice to reject or accommodate the abuse. With ignorance, the victim dances to the tune set by culture and the environment. Looking at narratives one and three, there is the expression of certainty that is echoed through the use of negation in *I will not encourage anybody to accept to live under that kind of atmosphere* and the existential process expressed in *there are usually signals that begin with a certain degree of tension*. This expression of certainty is meant to show the dangerousness of staying in an environment favorable to domestic abuse. While narrative two expresses a sigh of relief brought about by the ability to start all over, there is a subtle regret of the time wasted in accommodating the abuse.

Discourses of Abuse and Separation

The participants place side by side their abuse in the domestic setting and the choice they had to make to survive. These narratives aim to explain the relationship between their experiences and their effects. These conclusions coming as a result of the abuse were not something planned from the inception of the relationships. It is viewed in this study as a survival medium. Looking at Fairclough's explanation dimension embedded in sentences structures, tenses, and choices of mood, the relationship between social events (domestic abuse) and social structures (marriage) that affect these events and are also affected by them are exemplified in the narratives (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Like the victim in the narrative below, separation rather than death is a preferred means of escape.

...Where do I even begin? Is it the cheating, the insults, the disgrace, the beating, the embarrassment...what? Where will I begin? Some memories are sometimes better to just leave them where they are. We were the talk of the quarter. When he comes home, he starts with the food, goes to the children, goes to how useless I am...how I am the cause of his setbacks, that since he got married to me he has only bad luck. I am a teacher and ENS graduate. I have taken loans upon loans and given him to better his business...what did I not do na? what? He will blame his business failure on me, blame his problems with his family on me....my dear, before I ran away I had smelt death. I was dying slowly, trying to protect him from my family, trying to stay married, trying to avoid disgrace...but here I am. Than to die eh I beg, leave...(Emmaculate)

Fairclough looks at interpretation as the analysis of the cognitive process of the participants and their interactions (Fairclough, 2001a., Wodak & Meyer, 2009). The use of nominalization in *the cheating, the beating* that continues with the description in other noun phrases: *he starts with the food, goes to the children, goes to how useless I am ...* gives a picture of what the narrator lived through that informed her choice of leaving. The processing of the torture using the cognitive mental process and the interaction of the agents in the narrative polarizing one as the perpetrator and the other as the victim of set regulations of institutions prepares the scene for the expected outcome. The state of being that is largely represented by the relational process in *I was dying slowly ... but here I am...* stating clearly that her survival, her staying alive was only assured after she left.

The allusion to therapy as a way forward in the narratives of these participants is also expressed in the narrative below.

My husband does not beat me. We are Christians but just the way my husband treats me sometimes. Anything that comes from me is always wrong. Whatever I do makes no sense but I am there because I have to be a submissive wife. The church expects me to just be praying for him and persevering as part of the Christian journey... it is really frustrating. I look at myself sometimes and I just feel trapped. I don't want to leave my home but I am working on my self-worth now that I am in therapy and trusting that gradually I will be strong enough to see the best in me (Mabel)

The allusion to the role played by religion in maintaining the status quo concerning abuse in homes is exemplified in the clauses: *we are Christians, I have to be a submissive wife, and the church expects me to just be praying for him. Persevering as part of the Christian journey...* The predominant use of the mental and relational processes by this participant shows the psychological struggle going on in her mind and the battle to remain strong while maintaining and holding on to her faith. These are seen in: *I have to be, it is really, I look at myself, I just feel, I am in, I will be...* This state of being pushes the participant to do something to improve her mental health which leads her to go for therapy to maintain a certain degree of emotional balance.

Discursive strategies

Having looked at the discourses in the narratives of the participants above, this section focuses on the discursive strategies employed to express the discourses.

Patterns of Transitivity

The method for data collection and analysis is a mixed quantitative and qualitative method. Twenty-nine (29) narratives were collected from women who visited the Trauma Healing and Resilience Center in Bamenda, North West Region, Cameroon, during the Anglophone Crisis, specifically in 2022. The average words per narrative were 295 and 1076 verb groups were analyzed under processes.

Description to Fairclough (1989) is the experiential value in which the text producer's experience of the natural and social world is interpreted through the content in the form of personal knowledge and beliefs. To Halliday, experiential metafunction construes our experience of the world and its chief grammatical system is transitivity expressed in this study mainly using the verbal process (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

The material process in the narratives portrays the actions of the abusive persons in the discourses: *the way my husband treats me, he will shout and insult my mother, every day I was beaten, he pushed me from the stairs, isolated, frightened and terrorized, forcefully have sex with me, he chased me with a cutlass.* The relational process describing the state of being of the abusive partner is found in the following expressions: *my husband was domineering and abusive, my father was abusive and wicked, some fathers are useless, the man is a beast, she is going crazy.* T

he mental process describing the victim includes: *I realized I needed help, I just felt like dying, I feel trapped, I felt permanently confused, I still feel pain, I smelt death.* The relational process describing the victims can be found in the following expressions: *I had no choice, I had been sold off, I have no right, I was so bitter, I was in shock, I am so depressed, I became so restless, it traumatized the children.*

These processes used in the narratives give the listener a clear picture of the intentions of the abusive persons and the mental health damage their actions cause to the victims. The relational process shows the intensive, possessive or circumstantial relationship with other participants. In the narratives collected, the verbal process which expresses and indicates is made use of, even though not as much as some of the other processes.

This process can be found in the following expressions: *will ask me. She said her son, I said to myself, I want to talk, they call me a prostitute, to say it was, has asked me, my father's sister told me, he reported me, and I complain, he said that instead, to talk to his, he will say, speak up.* The existential process involves verbs that deal with existence. These include the forms of 'be' especially. In the narratives they include *lives, been, was, is, raise, remain.* The behavioral process is seen in describing the process of talking, shaking, palpating, seeing, looking, started crying, screaming.

The table below shows the percentage of the processes used in the narratives.

Table 1
Representation of Processes in Narratives of Victims of GBV

S/N	Processes	Frequency	%
1	Material	467	43.40
2	Relational	224	20.81
3	Mental	154	14.31
4	Behavioural	114	10.60
5	Verbal	88	8.18
6	Existential	29	2.70
	TOTAL	1076	100

The table above shows the percentages of the different processes as found in the narratives of women who have been violated. The material process is the most used followed by the relational, mental, and behavioral then the verbal and existential. This reveals the description of actions by the perpetrators against the victims. The speaker's choice of verbs portrays ideological implications that further portray events to suit their beliefs and purposes. The narratives reveal that the victims mostly use material action intention processes to give a vivid picture of the frightful experiences they go through from their perpetrators. The material process was the most used because the perpetrations act on their victims intentionally. The mental process used, reveals how the victims feel about what their perpetrators do to them. The relational process portrays their state of depression.

Mood and Modality

A) Modality and polarity

Mood and modality fall under the interpersonal metafunction in Systemic Functional Linguistics. Modality reveals the addresser's commitment to a proposition to the truth. It is the midpoint between yes and no, and also some degree of probability or usuality. The pattern of certainty and uncertainty, drawing the line between the abuser and the victim expressed in modal structures, cut across the discourses (Fairclough, 1989, Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). These structures are used in both the declarative and interrogative moods and in the negative forms to express the certainty in the decisions taken to safeguard the mental health of the narrators, to express the desperate situation of the victims, to show the degree of the callousness of the abuser and the blind eye turned on victims by family and culture.

These structures are as follows: *he would not let me learn a trade, they could never be able to repay my husband, I could not go back to my parents, I will just lie there, he will force his way through, I could not go back to him, I would have preferred to be beaten, we cannot have a civilized conversation, no woman should marry without working, I could not retaliate, I could no longer take it...*

The most used low modality value is 'could' with negative indicators such as *not* and *never*. *Could* is the past form of *can* and indicates ability. Since the victim could not do many things like trade, she could not leave her husband's house because the bride price could not be paid back, and she could not practice what she studied...meaning there was no ability because of no power, and no cultural empowerment.

The modal pattern has an emphasis on the use of *will*. The modality used in the narratives are speech functions of a proposition, modalization realized in probability and usuality. The use of 'will' can be seen in the following instances:

he will not give food money, he will not pay fees, how will my children go to school, we will owe rent, I will sell fruits, he will slap me, he will shout, neighbors will be listening, he will beat me, I will die and leave my children behind, I will do every house chore, he will just, he will say I should not, he will not talk to me, he will not even touch me, he will change, he will tear me into pieces, I will go mad, he will not give, he will abandon me, nobody will do anything

to him, he will just shut me up, he will force himself on me, I will spend some nights, the man will bring girls, he will shout and insult my mother, we will either hide, he will force me.

Will is used when referring to events that occur or happen often and talk about habitual actions that the speaker disapproves of. *Will* is used in saying what always happens in certain situations (macmillandictionary.com) and will happen. It shows intention, willingness, and insistence. *Will* is used by the victims because of the certainty of the perpetrators' actions. The excessive use of *will* by the narrators portrays the willingness of their perpetrators to make them suffer or to show the effect of the action on the victim. The victims even in their narrations still feel powerless as can be seen in their use of modals. They use more of the low modality value such as *can*, *could* and median modality values as *will*, *would*. They are still afraid and even though most of them have moved on by having jobs that have empowered them financially, and are out of the perpetrators' claws, they still feel threatened. This gives the impression that they remain traumatized and might have developed mental health issues.

Mood

The victims make use of the If-conditional clause and rhetorical questions. Most of the victims assume the role in the declarative and interrogative moods because they are narrating their experiences with their perpetrators.

If- conditional Clause

The use of the if-conditional clause is a pattern discovered in the narratives of the women. A conditional clause consists of two parts: a main clause and a subordinate clause. The cause is usually the subordinate clause which begins with *if* and describes the cause of the situation while the main clause is the effect that explains. *If*, is used in conditional sentences introducing an event which might have happened, is happening, or might happen.

If, is found in the following clauses: *If I don't have an explanation for anything, I was beaten; If I don't defend myself, he will beat me mercilessly; If I don't take a hard stand, it will continue; If I leave my husband, it will bring shame and dishonor to the family; If I knew then what I know now..., if I give him all my money..., if they call me prostitute..., if I am not home at 4pm..., if food was not ready on time..., if he had other children..., if I kept forgiving him..., if I didn't want sex with him..., if they insult you all the time..., if I don't come back to him..., if he tries to pay fees..., if I show you the marks on my body..., if I don't speak up..., if I were the reason..., if I don't defend..., if I stayed, if I leave my husband..., if my husband beats me..., if he still does not stop..., if my immediate family..., if I leave now..., if I knew then..., if he touches her again,...*

Conditionals are used to state facts, give advice, discuss and analyze future and past situations, and talk about hypothetical situations (americanenglish.state.gov). In the case of the victims of GBV according to the narratives collected as data for this study, the victims are stating a fact.

Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions are not meant to elicit a response from the listener. The narrator asks them as though wondering aloud about what else they could have done differently to avert the torment they have or are receiving from their partners or homes.

The participants use the following rhetorical expressions: *What did I not do? What? Where will I begin? Is it the cheating...the embarrassment, what? What did I... Where do I even begin? If I leave, how will a 'buyam sellam' raise my children? Where will I even go to? Why didn't they just shoot me? Who could I complain to? Where could I go? From where will I start? If I leave, how will my children survive?*

The lament of the victims in rhetorical questions occurring repetitively for emphasis speaks of a complex cognitive struggle embedded in the relational process expressed in the interrogative clause. These questions are not inviting the listener into a conversation or an explanation. They are rather a degree of emphatic statements showing the ungrateful nature of the perpetrator and seeking the endorsement of the listener by expressing the fact that all options were exhausted and the only way to survival was separation or death. The mood of the victims remains the indicative mood where they use the declarative and the interrogative, And in this case, the interrogative remains more of a rhetorical question.

Implications

Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) argue that Systemic Functional Linguistics is a theoretical approach that analyses the relationship between social contexts and linguistic aspects. Transitivity analysis is widely used to explore the ideology behind the text as directed by the author. The transitivity system provides a valuable means of investigating how the reader's or/and listener's perception of the meaning of a text is influenced by a choice of certain processes and their participants. The analysis in this study has brought out the hidden ideologies in the narratives. The different discourses tell us what we should do in society as in allowing our girl children especially, to be educated in becoming literate and sensitizing them on the importance of having an income because these are some of the causes of violence. It also exposes the effects of domestic violence on children, women and its general effect on the society. Collins (1998) supports this view by saying a wide range of critical gender-sensitive accounts reveal the widespread occurrence of gender-based violence, and show how it arises within contexts of social inequalities. The discourses reveal that women who go through GBV can avoid it by being educated and economically empowered. Additionally, it is advisable for parents not to force their daughters to get married early or to get married because of wealth, and they should listen to their daughters who complain about their marriages. In like manner, traditional laws that make the woman less important should be reconsidered.

Checka and Atanga agree that some of the causes of GBV are gender inequalities, the abuse of power and harmful societal norms. Cheka (1996) argues that combined legal and social legitimization of men's authority over women and the extent of women's disempowerment are such that women seem to be unwilling to use even those legal opportunities which could help them not only to challenge but also to seek redress for violent or oppressive behavior on the

part of their husbands. Atanga (2021) proposes that the Cameroonian government policy should ensure equitable gender representation in decision-making positions, the educational build-up of political capital, leadership and agency among women, and education that dissociates politics and leadership from masculinity.

CONCLUSION

One of the stylistic consequences of the dominant material paradigm, where mental and other processes signifying reflection and being are suppressed, is that it creates a highly 'actional' descriptive framework. Darani (2014) argues that the choices writers (and speakers) make can help to promote meanings related to their agenda. The use of the interpersonal function of language has revealed that the victims in their speeches build images for themselves and their perpetrators. With the material process, an action or event can be of intention when the actor is acting deliberately. The material processes indicate doings and happenings and portray deliberateness (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), revealed in the analysis. Systemic Functional Linguistics as used in the analysis of the narratives of gender-based violated women in Cameroon-Bamenda has revealed patterns of choice in their use of language. Looking at the narratives used as data for this work, it goes without saying that language plays a great role in the way narratives are birthed and experiences are expressed. This is seen in the fact that people have a choice in the words they use to describe themselves, how they feel, how they respond to pain, and how they believe the world around them. Making use of some discursive strategies using Halliday's and Fairclough's perspectives of analyzing and interpreting discourses, this study has been able to express the struggles of victims of domestic abuse concerning gender. The research concludes through discourses identified that a fertile ground for violence, especially GBV, is the traditional laws that affect social relationships, economic prowess, and political activities. The use of more of the material process shows the intention of the victims to give a glaring picture of the actions the perpetrators take against them. The analysis of the processes reveals that the perpetrators deliberately inflict pain on the victims who go through so much pain that can lead to mental health issues. Mood and modality portray the victims as powerless and still going through pain even after leaving their perpetrators - the reason for the use of more medium and low modality values. The extensive use of *will* indicates the certainty of what the perpetrator will do if the victim carries out a particular act.

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