

**A LEXICO – SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED OBITUARIES
IN THE *DAILY NATION* NEWSPAPER**

OYOKO AMOS MAINA

PG/MA/101/2011

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN LINGUISTICS**

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

MASENO UNIVERSITY

2017

DECLARATION

Declaration by the Candidate

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University. No part of this thesis may be reproduced without prior permission of the author and/ or Maseno University.

OYOKO AMOS MAINA. SIGN.....

DATE.....

PG/MA/101/2011

Declaration by supervisors

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

DR. PAMELA OLOO SIGN..... DATE

Department of Linguistics

Maseno University

DR. YAKUB ADAMS SIGN DATE

Department of Linguistics

Maseno University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The journey towards accomplishing this research has been challenging but rewarding. One that could not have been accomplished without the favour of the Almighty God. I thank God for two things: His reward of life, positive mindedness and His amazing grace; the reasons why I have come this far.

I would like to recognize the support, guidance and love of all those who walked with me.

First and foremost, special thanks to my very able supervisors; Dr. Pamela Oloo who challenged me to delve into the linguistic study of obituaries. Thank you for taking your time, with your calmness and intelligence in supervising this work. To Dr. Yakub Adams, thank you for your distinguished and brilliant scholarly advice and your thoughtful comments that helped me revise and put this work into the right perspective. No words can fully express my deepest gratitude to the two scholars for their valuable insights in this work.

I cannot forget the support and encouragement I received from Mr. Josiah N. Onsongo, former Principal, Ulumbi Secondary School, now the Principal, Nyagechenche Secondary School, Gucha South, Kisii County. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to pursue these studies. I am greatly indebted to you. God bless.

My special thanks go to my family and friends, who prayed and encouraged me a lot in the course of my work. Worth to mention is my dearest wife, Roseline, who continuously and painstakingly stood by me all the time. My loving mum, Margaret who constantly reminded me to accomplish this course and my three children, Winsley, Hopekins and Trevor.

DEDICATION

Firstly, I dedicate this work to God, the power behind all my success. I recognize my loving wife Roseline and my children Winsley, Hopekins and Trevor. I remember my late dad, George Opati, who never lived to see me go through this. To my mum, Margaret and my loving siblings, thank you so much for your support in this journey. To my Senior Pastor and teacher, Patrick Osale, of Word Of Life Mission, Khwisero, your valuable insights and encouragement that you desire to be a spiritual minister of great and successful people cannot go unmentioned.

ABSTRACT

Death has been argued to be a “fear-based taboo” in which different fears co-exist namely; fear of the loss of loved ones, fear of corruption of the body, fear of evil spirits and fear of what comes with death. Man has traditionally avoided talking about the subject of death using explicit terms. Their avoidance to speak freely about human mortality may be making obituary writers to resort to a variety of linguistic devices in order to compliment the departed and show respect to those left alive, satisfying in a way, both the social and religious impositions traditionally associated with human mortality. The purpose of this study is to examine the obituary as a form of advertisement whose functional language is carried out through praising, euphemistic and consolatory devices. The objectives of this study are to: describe how the lexical choices contribute to the meaning making process in obituaries and explore how transitivity processes aid in their informative purpose of obituaries where death is viewed as a material or mental process. Halliday’s (1985) theory of systemic functional linguistics was adopted for this study where ideational, interpersonal and the textual metafunctions of language were used, incorporating transitivity which deals with how meaning is interpreted and how the process transmits ideas. A descriptive research design was applied which accurately described phenomena through the narrative type, descriptions and classifications. The study entailed a library based research where total populations of two hundred obituaries were collected for a period of one and a half weeks. From these, a corpus of twenty purposively sampled obituary texts from the *Daily Nation* newspaper were used to generate data for analysis and discussion. Corpus compilation was used to capture the use of lexical items in the obituaries. Data was qualitatively analyzed by examining the lexical items of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives used to aid in the interpretation of obituaries basing on Halliday’s theory of systemic functional linguistics. The study revealed that ordinary words (lexical items) can be used in the context of the obituary text to render new meanings. Those lexical choices contribute to the meaning making process in obituaries by depicting death as a normal occurrence in a person’s life that should be accepted and appreciated, at times a calamity or misfortune. Death is not only presented as repose, a journey and a reward to the deceased, but also as a loss to the family of the deceased. In all cases, the lexical items used are meant to comfort the bereaved and eulogize or praise the deceased. The research further depicts that certain lexical items have been used as euphemisms to substitute the unpleasant and offensive concept of death using polite expressions. This is meant to mitigate the potential dangers of directly mentioning the taboo word of death. The research also reveals the use of the transitivity tenet of Halliday’s theory and its inherent material and mental processes in conveying the concept of death and how they help eulogize the deceased impart hope and console the bereaved. The study suggests that a further study on the relationship between euphemism and metaphors in the obituary texts be carried out since the point of divergence between the two processes has rather been fuzzy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Table of contents.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the study.....	1
1.1.1 Obituaries.....	1
1.1.2 Semantics.....	4
1.1.3 The Daily Nation newspaper.....	7
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	9
1.3 Research Questions.....	9
1.4 Objectives.....	10
1.5 Scope of the study.....	10
1.6 Justification.....	10
1.7 Theoretical Framework.....	11
1.8 Summary.....	20

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	21
2.1 Lexical Choices in Obituaries.....	21
2.2 Lexical Choices and Meaning Making	26
2.3 Transitivity Processes in Obituaries.....	28
2.4 Summary.....	31
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	32
3.0 Introduction.....	32
3.1 Research Design.....	32
3.2 Area of Study.....	33
3.3 Study Population.....	33
3.4 Sample size and Sampling procedure.....	33
3.5 Data Collection Techniques.....	35
3.6 Data Analysis.....	36
3.7 Reliability and Validity of Instruments	37
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	38
3.9 Summary.....	38
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION...39	
4.0 Introduction.....	39
4.1 Lexical choices and Meaning making Process.....	40
4.1.1 Nouns.....	41
4.1.1.1 Nouns indicating misfortune.....	41

4.1.1.2 Nouns Indicating Acceptance.....	43
4.1.1.3 Nouns Indicating Emotion.....	46
4.1.1.4 Nouns Indicating Comfort.....	48
4.1.1.5 Nouns Indicating Kinship	50
4.1.2 Verbs.....	50
4.1.2.1 Verbs Denoting Movement.....	51
4.1.2.2 Verbs Indicating Comfort.....	54
4.1.2.4 Verbs Denoting the struggles of Life.....	58
4.1.3 Adverbs.....	59
4.1.4 Adjectives.....	63
4.1.4.1 Adjectives Denoting Emotion.....	63
4.1.4.2 Evaluative Adjectives.....	69
4.1.4.3 Consolatory Adjectives.....	72
4.1.4.4 Adjectives Denoting Endearment.....	74
4.2 Transitivity Processes and their informative purpose.....	76
4.2.1 Material Processes.....	78
4.2.1.1 Material Action Intention Processes.....	78
4.2.1.2 Material Action Supervention Process.....	83
4.2.2 Mental Processes.....	90
4.3 Summary.....	95

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS.....	96
5.1 Introduction.....	96
5.2 Summary.....	96
5.3 Conclusion.....	98
5.4 Recommendations.....	99
5.5 Suggestions for further research	100
References.....	101
Appendices.....	106

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

This section provided the background information to this study. The information herein broadly looked at: Obituaries, Semantics and the *Daily Nation* newspaper. It also includes statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, significance of the study, scope and theoretical framework.

1.1.1 Obituaries

Some experiences are too traumatizing, they evoke trauma and negative emotions to be discussed without linguistic precautions. One of them is undoubtedly death, a timeless taboo in which psychological, religious and social impositions coexist, (Fernandez, 2009). Further to this, mankind's failure to come to terms with death has been pervasive in different times and societies. In fact, human beings have traditionally felt reluctant to deal with the subject of death using explicit terms. Whether owing to superstition, fear or social respect, the fact remains that when facing death, language users try to mitigate the effect of what they really wish to communicate. Despite this reluctance to discuss and mention the subject of death, there are communicative situations in which one cannot evade the notions of death and dying. This is best exemplified in the obituaries that announce death occurrence in newspapers.

The term "obituary" comes from a Greek word "obitus" which means "departure", a common euphemistic term for death (Sexton, 1997). According to the Advanced Learners

Dictionary (1991), an obituary is a news article that reports the death of a person, typically with an account of the person's life and the upcoming funeral details. An obituary is a record or an announcement of death or deaths, especially in a newspaper, usually with a brief biographical sketch of the deceased. Marelli and Rae (2004) observe that obituaries are written documents that reflect both the belief system of those who compose them and influence the thinking of those who read them. Obituaries present a special text because their content focuses exclusively on the qualities of one human being and how that person's life, at its end, can be represented. This study therefore sought to consider the obituary as a goal-oriented text with a social purpose, that is, language that is doing some job in some context.

Eid (2002) posits that the textual arrangements and content of obituaries can be argued to provide an understanding of how those who compose obituaries regard the life and death of the deceased and more generally, the important cultural element of dying and living in our societies. The obituary text also moulds our understanding of important elements of life and death and it is through them that the reality of everyday life is understood.

Eid (*ibid*) has argued that obituaries constitute a form of advertisement in which emotion is relayed. This therefore makes obituaries informative on the composition of facts about death and being more intimate, especially in their use for social or religious purpose, in which the feelings and emotions of the writer play a significant role. Eid (*ibid*) further notes that obituary texts have exhibited the reluctance by human beings to use explicit terms when dealing with the subject of death. Eid's studies bring out the effects this reluctance has by arousing certain feelings in the obituary readers by stressing the social status, virtues, religious standing and the general presentation of the deceased.

According to Rae and Marelli (2004), the obituary texts are an avenue that provides a view into our culture. Obituaries commemorate the lives of a single person; have at their centre what the society holds to be crucially important elements of one's life and death. As Fernandez (2007) observed, since ancient times, human beings have felt reluctant to deal with the subject of death using straight forward terms. The refusal to speak freely about human mortality derives from the fact that death is an involvement of psychological and social aspects of fear, superstition and religious taboos mainly of tact and respect towards the deceased and the surviving family members. It is hardly surprising that language users resort to a variety of linguistic devices in order to compliment the departed and show respect to those left behind, in away, fulfilling the fears traditionally associated with human mortality.

Fernandez (2006) posits that obituaries tend to offer a more emotive and intimate account of the deceased by means of consolatory and laudatory tactics to compliment the departed and, in so doing, satisfy the surviving family members. The obituaries perform a perlocutionary function whereby language is viewed as a means of persuading someone to do something or of annoying someone or bringing someone to their senses. It is an act performed by doing something. In this case, obituaries are oriented towards causing a favorable impression on the reader by showing the exemplary behavior of the deceased. They exhibit the emotive overtones with a purpose to praise the deceased and reinforce the social status enjoyed by his or her family, giving room for the wide use of consolatory and complimentary diction.

This study therefore seeks to analyze the obituary writer's avoidance to deal with the painful and traumatizing and "fear-based" taboo of death using explicit terms and instead

resorting to polite forms of expression in an effort to mitigate the potential effects of mentioning death overtly. As Fernandez (2009) notes, positively loaded words such as; “beloved”, “respected” and a “steady gentleman of outstanding integrity” are typical of obituaries and they will be understood to constitute a proof of the subjectivity attached to death. Through the lexical choices, the obituary writer passes judgment and his preference for lexical items with an emotional content clearly reveal what their judgment is. In other words, the tendency to resort to such positively loaded diction illustrates an obituary writer’s intention of complimenting the deceased by showing his or her social status or personal virtues. The obituary writer can resort to negatively loaded words to refer to death as an instance of calamity, affliction and this emphasizes the misfortune of the deceased and that of the surviving relatives and friends (Fernandez, 2006).

1.1.2 Semantics

According to Sebastian (2002), Semantics is that part of linguistics that is concerned with meaning. Further, Sebastian observes that semantics is exclusively concerned with the meanings of linguistic entities such as words, phrases, grammatical forms and sentences. The meanings of linguistic utterances are also a matter of semantics. Uncovering the knowledge of meanings of words and sentences and revealing its nature are the central objectives of semantics. Semantics aims at analyzing what a speaker or writer intends to communicate with an utterance, thus, a speaker or writer’s choice of words is in pursuit of a certain communication intention. Choice being a component of semantics therefore brings in the dimension of stylistics in language.

Semantics is the study of meanings, meanings being ideas or concepts which can be transferred from the mind of the speaker (writer) to the mind of the hearer or reader by embodying them in the forms of one language or another, Lyons (1985). Further, there are two types of meaning that were applied in this study; lexical meaning and sentence meaning. It is generally recognized that the two are inseparable, that one cannot account for one without accounting for the other. The meaning of a sentence depends upon the meaning of sentences in which they occur which eventually brings out the grammatical meaning. In so far as linguistics is concerned primarily with the description of language systems, lexical, sentence and grammatical meanings clearly fall within the scope of linguistic semantics, Lyons (*ibid*).

Enkvist (1973) defines choice with regard to the language of communicating a given idea as the aggregate of the contextual probabilities of the linguistic items of a text to communicate meaning. Aggregate implies that language choice is not the result of an isolated item but of more than one linguistic item. To Enkvist (*ibid*), choice of linguistic style of communication is the result of the occurrence of many linguistic items observed after analysis of a text. Contextual probability implies the expectations we have about certain linguistic features that occur in a given context. To Enkvist (*ibid*), linguistic stylistic analysis asks two basic questions: Firstly, what is the context of language use? (What, to whom or when is this context of writing?) And secondly, what linguistic features have been used in relation to context?

Linguistic stylistics studies the way meaning is created through language. The goal of stylistics is not simply to describe the formal features of texts for their own sake but also show their functional significance in the interpretation of the text. Linguistic codes,

theories and frameworks are used as the analytical tools that describe and explain how the whole text works as it does on how we come from words on the page to its meaning (Wales, 2001).

Linguistic stylistics is concerned with the systematic analysis of style in language and how this can vary according to such factors as genre, context, author, the medium, the participants and the purpose of the presentation (Leech, 2008). This study entailed a systematic study in the context of death, with the bereaved or close family members, friends or relatives as the author, the medium being writing and the purpose being to inform the public about a recent death of a person and the related funeral details.

Leech and Short (1981) posit that stylistics examines the grammar, lexical choices, semantic levels, phonological and discursive devices. The meaning in a language comes through the linguistic choices that a writer makes either consciously or unconsciously. Choice was purposeful to this study which sought to analyze the lexical choices made by an obituary writer, which was instrumental in enhancing the reader's understanding of death.

This study of lexical items in obituaries therefore looked at style as a choice between alternative linguistic expressions. Choice here referred to both the selection of linguistic structures and the order in which the linguistic structures appeared. In this case, style was regarded as a choice that every text necessarily met among a certain number of possibilities included in the language and in helping the reader to understand the subject matter that is the theme of the various obituary texts in this study.

This study set out to examine a sample of obituaries from the Daily Nation newspaper, with a goal of providing an understanding of what lexical choices as an aspect of linguistic style contributes to our understanding of death and living in our society.

1.1.3 The *Daily Nation* Newspaper

In the modern society, the print media plays a significant role in informing and influencing the perception of readers. Newspapers are part of the print media. According to *Kenya-Advisor.com* © 2007-2014, Daily Nation is seen as the most influential of all the newspapers in Kenya. It is widely regarded as being independent and balanced. It is the largest newspaper not only in Kenya, but also the whole of East Africa. Its daily circulation is above 200,000 copies but as the copies are often read by many people, the actual readership is much higher. It has a market share of almost 75 percent.

Kress (1983) observes that The *Daily Nation* was started as a Swahili weekly called *Taifa* by the Englishman Charles Hayes. It was bought in 1959 by His Highness Prince Karim Agha Khan IV, the spiritual leader of the Ismaili community worldwide. *Taifa* was then changed into a daily nation newspaper. *Taifa leo*, Swahili for “Nation Today” in January 1980. An English language edition called Daily Nation was published on 3rd October 1980, in a process organized by the former editor of the British News Chronicle, Michael Curtis. The publisher was East African newspapers (Nation series) Limited, which later became the Nation media group. The *Daily Nation* and its sister paper, *Sunday Nation* have grown phenomenally since inception. The *Daily Nation* paper carries a variety of news items such as general news across the country, Africa and the world at large, commentaries by editors on emerging issues in the society, sports news, business news,

and information on environmental issues, job advertisement or vacancies and the obituaries section. Of concern to this study was the obituaries section of the *Daily Nation* newspaper.

The *Daily Nation* newspaper carries the obituaries section as a form of advertisement about death. According to Dyer (1982), advertising in its simplest sense means: drawing attention to something or notifying or informing somebody of something. He further adds that an advertisement is a message aimed at persuading readers or listeners to buy a particular product, favor a particular organization or agree with a particular idea. In print media, the lexical choices ensure that the advertisement achieves its goals. According to the New Encyclopedia Britannica (1991) it is designed to inform, influence and persuade.

Dyer (1982) asserts that advertising uses language distinctively and that there are certain advantages in making statements in an unusual way, as well as, communicating with people using simple, explicit language that moves those (readers) into action. It is important to note that the choice of diction in a given advertisement, particularly the obituary is very important as it facilitates communication between the obituary writer and the reader. Said differently, this is because the way the reader interprets a given diction choice in an obituary advertisement is an issue that requires critical insight. This study therefore endeavored to critically examine lexical items used in obituaries as a unique form of advertisement, not meant to promote a new commercial product on the market but in its role and effort to inform and influence given readers thinking about death as an event in life that is a journey, a reward or a rest.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since ancient times, mankind's failure to come to terms with death has been pervasive in different times and societies. Obituary writers have traditionally avoided talking about the subject of death using explicit terms since they regard death as a "fear-based taboo". It is hardly surprising that language users resort to a variety of linguistic devices in order to compliment the departed while remaining respectful to those left behind. The fact remains that when facing death, obituary writers try to mitigate the effect of what they really intend to communicate. The avoidance to speak about human mortality derives from the fact that death triggers psychological and social aspects of fear, superstition and taboos mainly of avoidance and respect to the surviving family members. The use of lexical items such as nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives in obituaries is devoted to producing particular effects on the readers by stressing the social status, virtues, religious standing and general presentation of the deceased. This study set out to examine the obituary as a form of advertisement whose functional language is carried out through different praising, laudatory, euphemistic and consolatory devices of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives which display the virtues of the deceased and grief of the surviving family members in an effort to communicate meaning.

1.3 Research Questions

This study aimed to answer the following questions

- i) How do the lexical choices used in obituaries contribute to the meaning making process in obituaries?
- ii) How do the transitivity processes aid in the informative purpose of obituaries?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this research was to carry out a lexico-semantic analysis of language use in selected obituaries in the Daily Nation newspaper. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Describe how the lexical choices contribute to the meaning making process in obituaries.
- ii. Examine how transitivity processes aid in the informative purpose of obituaries.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focused on the lexico-semantic analysis of selected obituaries from the *Daily Nation* newspaper in Kenya, a special form of advertisement in the print media. The analysis looked at the obituary as a record of a death announcement in the newspaper, comprising a brief biographical sketch of the deceased. The study centered on the use of nouns with positive connotations, verbs, adverbials, adjectival modifications, euphemisms and superlative adjectives. This was done using the tools provided by the Systemic Functional Grammar theory by Michael Halliday (1985).

1.6 Justification of the Study

The avoidance to speak freely about human mortality makes obituaries constitute an avenue of different means of language use in coping with death, making obituary writers to resort to a wide variety of lexical devices in order to compliment the departed and show respect to those left behind hence serving a semantic purpose. Semantics being an aspect of linguistics that is concerned with meaning, and the obituary being a unique

form of advertisement designed to inform, persuade and influence the perception of the obituary readers, this study will provide an overview of the selected open category lexical item classes of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives used in obituary texts and how they play a role in informing, persuading and influencing the perceptions of given obituary readers in their view of death either as a calamity, a journey or a form of comfort of the deceased. It is the purpose of this study to provide an overview of the main lexical choices use in selected obituaries of the *Daily Nation* newspaper and analyze to what extent the lexical choices have an informative purpose. According to the *Kenya-Advisor.com* © 2007-2014, the *Daily Nation* newspaper is seen as the most influential newspaper in Kenya. It is widely regarded as being independent and balanced. It is the largest newspaper not only in Kenya but also the whole of East Africa. Its daily circulation is above 2000,000 copies but as the copies are often read by many people, the actual readership is higher. It has a share market of almost 75 percent. This study will focus on the use of lexical items in obituaries to enhance meaning potential, while also providing the reader with aesthetic experience.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This section of the study outlines the theoretical framework used in the data analysis in this study. This research analyzes lexical choices used in obituaries. When an obituary writer uses a particular lexical item in expressing the offensive, tabooed or fear-based concept of death, the reader should be able to compute the correct interpretation or understanding of the choice and use of that particular lexical item.

This study was carried out basing on the tenets of the Systemic Functional Grammar theory, an approach to linguistics that considers language as a social semiotic system. Michael Halliday (1985) developed the theory from the notion of system which he borrowed from Firth (1960). System became a fundamental concept in the description of grammar. Halliday (*ibid*) sees a system as a set of options and thus meaning is interpreted as a choice. The speaker or writer of a language is regarded as carrying out, simultaneously and successively, a number of distinct choices. As an approach to linguistic description, systemic functional grammar aims to provide a comprehensive account of how language is used in the communication context.

Systemic Functional Linguistics states that language is a verbalized structure used to communicate meanings which arise in the context of use. It explores how people use language in different contexts to perform social functions and how language is structured. The ultimate aim of Systemic Functional Linguistics is to show how the language system or structures of language function as a realization of the social system and structures.

For Halliday (1985), a central theoretical principle then is that any communication involves choices. The choices available in any language variety are mapped using the representation tool of the “system network”. Systemic functional linguistics is also functional because it considers language to have evolved under the pressure of particular functions that the language has to serve.

According to Halliday (1985), all languages involve three much generalized metafunctions: constructing experience (meaning out of the world), enacting social

relations (meaning concerned with interpersonal relations) and weaving together these functions to create a text. Because these functions are considered to come into being simultaneously, thus one cannot mean about the world without the world either having a real or virtual audience, language must also be able to bring these meanings together: this is the role of structural organization, be that grammatical, semantic or textual. Halliday (1985) then tried to develop a linguistic theory that is applicable to any human language. His theory and descriptions are based on these principles, on the basis that they are required to explain the particularly complexity of human language. These principles are: Meaning is a choice. Users select options that arise in an environment of other options and that the power of language resides in its organization as a huge network of interrelated choices (paradigmatic dimension). In its evolution from primary to higher semiotic, a space was created in which meanings could be organized in their own terms, as a purely abstract network of interrelations. This development put language on the road to become an infinite meaning making system (the stratification dimension)

A systemic grammar differs from other grammars in that it is paradigmatic: a set of alternative features, of which one must be chosen if the entry condition is satisfied. System was a feature of Halliday's early theoretical work which was invoked to account for the account of one, rather than another among events, and therefore a system network is a theoretical tool to describe the set of options available in a language variety. As Fowler (1986) observes, when we speak or write something, the lexical choices made and the structures of our sentences convey an implicit analysis of the topic and the attitude about it. Language is thus a sum of what a speaker or writer can do with the same semantic strategies available to him or her and a functional analysis seeks to make sense

of the various options: why in the context and the overall purpose of communication, one option rather than the other should be used.

Systemic Functional Linguistics is primarily concerned with the grammatical choices made available to speakers and writers. This choice relates the speakers or writers intention to the concrete forms of language. Therefore, according to Systemic Functional Linguistics, grammar is seen as meaning potential shared by language and its users. In addition, functional bases of grammatical phenomena are divided into three broad areas called metafunctions: the ideational, interpersonal and the textual metafunctions, (Halliday, 1985)

Systemic Functional Linguistics advances the premise that there is a complete interconnectedness between linguistic and social context and that the main focus of linguistic study is how people use language to make meanings with each other as they carry out activities of their lives. Christine and Unsworth (2000). Indeed, the theory acknowledges that any language use serves simultaneously to construct some aspects of experience, to negotiate relationship and to organize the language successfully so that it realizes a satisfactory message (Halliday,1985).

When we speak or write something, the words we choose and the structures of our sentences convey an implicit analysis of the topic and the attitude about it (Fowler:1986). Language is thus a sum of what the speaker or writer can do with the same semantic strategies available to him or her and a functional analysis seeks to make sense of the various options: why in the context and the overall purpose of communication, one option rather than the other should be selected.

Systemic Functional Linguistics is concerned with syntactic expressions or constructions. Thus, text is the smallest unit of analysis. The analysis of authentic products of social interactions, such that texts are considered in relation to the cultural and social context in which they are negotiated (Eggins, 2004). The obituary as a form of advertisement will provide syntactic expressions comprising a combination of lexical items used, their informative purpose and how they convey meaning.

As a social system, systemic functional grammar therefore subjects language to two types of variation, that is variation according to the user and variation according to use. In this study, both variation according to use and variation according to the user was of great significance since the former produced variation in meaning that was dependent on the on-going social activity and this is reflected on the social order in the special sense of variety of social processes. The latter equally indicates the perception of the obituary writer on the ongoing social activity, which is death. Halliday (1985) categorizes these variations according to use into three functions of language;

The ideational metafunction of language which is a means of reflecting on things. It is the presentation of experience of a given social group about the world around them and how they perceive the world. Its meaning is in the sense of the content and therefore represents processes, actions, events, processes of consciousness and relation. Therefore, words which carry meaning in a text are: nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Language represents experiences. Ideational metafunctions grammatical aspects that represent the world, its experiences, the usage of language and how it does it (Halliday:1985). This study investigates how lexical items are used in obituaries not only to interact but also represent the reality of death.

The second function, the interpersonal metafunction is a means of acting on things. Meaning is seen as a form of action such that the writer or speaker does something to the reader (listener) by means of language. At this level, language is used both to establish and maintain a stance of social relationship, to express view points and attitudes about the world around readers and possibly change their view points, stance and attitude about death as reported in obituaries. This study will see how meaning is exchanged between the obituary writer and the readers and what attitudes are portrayed about death and how they impact on the obituary reader.

The textual metafunction uses language to organize our experiential, logical and interpersonal meaning into coherent and linear whole, the words we use and how we sequence words to carry meanings. The ideational and interpersonal metafunctions rely on the textual function which enables the realization and also ensures language relevance. The textual function provides a chance, with the ability to construct messages so that theme combines with rheme which is the basis of transitivity. Transitivity is necessary in this research as it determines the necessary participant roles as presented by clauses.

The term transitivity in this study is used to refer to how meaning is interpreted and how the process transmits ideas. Halliday (1985) reinstates that a group's most powerful conception of reality consists of "on-goings", doing, happening,, feeling and being. The goings on are sorted out in the semantic system of language expressed through the grammar of the clause. Transitivity will be used to show how some words and expressions are either foregrounded or obfuscated. This is in agreement with Fowler (1986) who observes that linguistic codes do not reflect the reality naturally, rather they

organize, classify and interpret the subjects of discourse so that in them, are embodiments of theories of how the world is viewed.

Transitivity processes are expressed by clauses in three potential components: the process itself, which is expressed by the verb phrase and the participants whose roles are realized by the noun phrase and the circumstances associated with the process, normally expressed by the adverbial and adjectival phrases. The processes can be classified according to:

Material processes which represents the actions. It is the process of doing. The material process has two inherent participant roles associated with them: THE ACTOR – an obligatory element expressed by the clause and an optional GOAL – which represents the person, entity affected by the process.

The verbalization process which is the process of saying. The participant roles associated with the verbalization process are THE SAYER (individual who is speaking) and THE TARGET (the addressee to whom the process is directed). To this, the role of VERBIAGE may be added, which in its original non-derogatory sense means “that which is said”

The mental process which is the process of sensing. They are internalized and are such quite different in quality to the externalized process of doing and speaking. Mental processes may be defined as perception processes (thinking and understanding). The inherent participant roles in the mental process are THE SENSOR (conscious being, reacting or thinking) and THE PHENOMENON (the perceived, reacted to or thought about)

The relational process expresses the process of being. Usually, they signal that a relationship exists between two participants. The participant roles associated with the relational process are THE CARRIER (roughly “topic” of the clause) and THE ATTRIBUTE (a description about the topic should suffice)

This study concerned itself with all the three metafunctions of language with its semantic derivative of transitivity.

The ideational metafunction of language is a means of reflecting on things. It is the representation of experience of a given social group about the world around them and also how they conceive the world. It is the meaning in the sense of content and therefore represents processes, actions, events, processes of consciousness and relation. Therefore the words that carry meaning in a text are nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Language represents experiences thus, ideational functions denote aspects of grammar that represents the world, its experiences and what language does and how it does it (Halliday: 1985). This study will investigate how lexical choices are used in the obituaries, not only to interact but also represent reality.

The second metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction is a means of acting on things. Meaning is seen as a form of action that the writer or speaker does something to the reader or listener by means of language. At this level, language is used to establish and maintain a stance of social relationship, to express view points and attitudes about the world around viewers and possibly change the view points, stance and attitude of others. Obituaries tend to influence the attitude of the readers as they attempt to pass the death

message. The present study shows how meaning is exchanged in the obituaries and how they impact on the readers.

The textual metafunction uses language to organize our experiential, logical and interpersonal meaning into a coherent linear whole. The words we use and how or the way we organize them carry meanings. In systemic functional approach, sentences encode not just one but three meanings simultaneously related to the ideational and interpersonal functions of language (Halliday:1985). This study applied the three aspects of context of communication to examine how obituaries are constructed and interpreted in the wider context to examine how obituary texts are constructed and interpreted in the wider context of the culture of the community with regard to death.

The ideational and interpersonal functions rely on the textual function which enables their realization and also ensures language relevance. The textual function provides a chance with the ability to construct messages so that theme combines with rheme which is the basis of transitivity. Transitivity is important in this research because it will determine the necessary participant roles as presented by clauses.

The term transitivity refers to how meaning is represented in the clause and how processes transmit ideas. Thus, it is concerned with how clauses are connected to make meaning. In this study, the transitivity tenet of the theory was restricted to an examination of the material and mental processes grammatically realized in the predicate and how these reflect on the informative purpose of obituary text. A corpus of clauses reflecting on the material and mental processes from the obituary texts were sampled, analyzed and discussions made in order to demonstrate how syntactic choice (form) reflects on the

theme of the sampled texts and the way syntactic markedness helps communicate in the text.

1.8 Summary

This chapter has introduced the area of lexico- semantic analysis of selected obituaries in the *Daily Nation* newspaper. It gave the background information leading to the statement of the problem. It has also outlined the objectives of the study, the scope and justification of the study. Lastly, it has presented the theoretical framework which is used to analyze the data, which is Halliday's theory of systemic functional linguistics (1985). Systemic Functional Linguistics is concerned with the way people use language in different contexts to perform social functions and how language is structured, hence the social characters of obituary texts. The next chapter provides a review of literature relating to this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses research on obituaries. It further offers a glimpse into the lexical choices are used in obituaries, language and the meaning making process in death presentation in obituaries and finally the syntactic forms used in obituaries, their informative purpose and how they embody the reality of death in obituaries.

2.1 Lexical Choices in Obituaries

Ononrekpenre (1994) explores how meaning is communicated in a text by identifying the constituent units that interact to communicate meaning. The features of the text, the signs within the text and the interpretive codes give these signs meanings in the interpretation of the whole text. Using Pierce's sign types, the study identified the signs within the text as identical, symbolic and iconic. The signs were then analyzed basing on Saussure's (1983) dyadic model of the sign consisting of the signifier and the signified. The study examined the structural relationships between the various signifiers present in the text (syntagmatic relations) and also the provision of choices from a range of alternative signifiers as slots of the syntagm. The study was interested in the message at the level of denotative and connotative meanings and also at the level where these denotative and connotative meanings specifically derive from the way a particular society uses and values signs in a text. The proposed study deviates from Ononrekperne's study as it looks at the lexical levels and their semantic connotations in obituary text.

Marin (1996) studied euphemisms of death and dying in English and Spanish. Marin's study on obituaries focused on the existence of coherent conceptual organization

underlying the use of various expressions of death and dying, which were derived from an individual's bodily and social experiences. Marin's (*ibid*) study focused on the comparative study of conceptual metaphors of death in the English and Spanish obituary pages. This study also examined the contrasting usage of such expressions in English and Spanish. The study revealed notable parallels in conceptual terms such as metaphors, euphemisms and exaggerations in both languages. The current study deviates from Marins cross-cultural approach as it will examine the lexical choices and their semantic connotations in the obituaries from the *Daily Nation* newspaper.

Rae and Giana (2004) focused on examining the obituary texts appearing in *The New York Times* and how they provide an understanding of how those who write obituaries regard the death and life of the deceased and more importantly, the cultural elements of dying and living in our society, with an attempt to comprehend the reality of everyday life. The study revealed the important beliefs our society holds about our lives and deaths, especially with respect to the cause of death, life expectancy and gender differences in our life and death stories. Rae and Giana's study differs from the current study which examines the lexical items and their semantic connotation and how meaning is enhanced through the choice of particular lexical items. Given the aim of this study, it deviates from Rae and Giana's study which entailed the description of the kinds of obituaries that appeared in the New York times newspaper with the goal of providing definition of a linguistic genre of obituaries and an understanding of what these texts contribute to the social understanding of death and dying. Their study centered at a comparison of two types of obituary texts in their view: edited obituaries, those written by the editorial staff which they found to be quite predictable, with most of the elements such as who died, the

cause of death, life and career history recounted in a reverse order that is from present back. They also studied family authored obituary texts which were simply noted to be announcements, some resembling messages of sympathy. The perspective of the family authored texts was found to be subjective and personal. Their study of family authored obituary texts analyzed the use of lexical items but from the perspective of Brown and Yule's (1983) linguistic theory of discourse analysis. This study is in deviation from Rae and Marelli's (2004) study which viewed an obituary text as a window that provided a view into a culture, further arguing that the textual arrangement and content of obituaries provided an understanding of how those who composed obituaries regarded the death and life of the deceased, and more generally the important cultural elements of dying and living in our society. This deviates from our current study which seeks to unearth the obituary text as being socially useful in leaving a strong impression and creating favorable conditions for attaining a communicative goal of relaying the concept of death by stripping off its most explicit and offensive overtones through the use of lexical items such as nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives while retaining the communicative purpose basing on Halliday's (1985) linguistic theory of Systemic Functional grammar with its semantic derivative of transitivity which differs from Rae & Giana's (*ibid*) which is concerned with providing definitions of linguistic genres of obituaries and how they contributed to the social understanding of death.

Eliecer (2006) explores the euphemistic language in obituary pages in the mid nineteenth century, a time when the sentimentalisation of death provided a fertile soil for the use of euphemism. The study attempted to trace an account of the different conceptual metaphors that aimed at substituting the notion of death and dying within Lakoff and

Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory. The results of the study supported the idea that there was a tendency to present sentimental obituaries in which the taboo of death can be accounted for by various conceptual metaphors, most of which revealed death as a desirable event under the influence of Christian beliefs. The present study deviated from Elicer's as it goes beyond the metaphor but looks at the lexical items used to communicate the concept of death. Further, Halliday's (1985) theory of systemic functional grammar was applied.

Fernandez, (2007) with the aim of providing an overview of the main linguistic devices used in a sample of the obituaries and analyze to what extent such devices have a social purpose carried out a study which found out that the obituary constituted a breeding ground for the analysis of linguistic and social patterns related to death, as the Victorian period was especially sensitive to issues of death and social class. The study was based on the theoretical assumptions of discourse analysis by Fairclough (1992). Fairclough's socially and linguistically oriented view of discourse allowed the study to go beyond the language analysis of texts and relate the linguistic elements and patterns found in obituaries to the social conventions of the Victorian period. The present study differed from Fernandez (*ibid*) in which the analysis of obituaries went further to study the stylistic aspects of euphemism, metaphor and the hyperbole in communicating the concept of death which was not the domain of this study.

In addition, the cognitive approach to euphemism has also gained a sizeable contribution. Fernandez (2009) highlighted the metaphorical conceptualization of euphemisms in epitaphs excerpted from the cemetery of Albacete (Spain). The study revealed the main characteristics of the conceptualization of death from a diachronic perspective. Fernandez

study will significantly assist the current study as it will provide a guiding principle as far as the cognitive interpretation of euphemisms as death being viewed as a journey, a reward or a loss is concerned. This study sought to describe the different lexical items used to refer to death in the sampled and analyzed *Daily Nation* newspaper obituaries. It is worthy to note that a study on the lexico-semantics of obituaries is a worthwhile concern as the reviewed literature has not dealt with the lexical and semantic processes of word creation and use in obituaries.

Crespo (2006) explored the flowering of euphemism and the pervasiveness of the metaphor to refer to human mortality. The study analyzed the different metaphors aiming at substituting the notions of death and dying in Victorian obituaries within the framework of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory initiated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). In the findings, the metaphor was recognized as the most powerful mechanism in the formation of euphemism of the taboo of death. The hyperbole was also used to mitigate the taboo of death through such words as **eternity of happiness, wreath of glory and the world of unending glory**. The acronym *requie scere in pace*, whose acronymic equivalent is RIP was used motivated by the figurative association of conceptualizing death as a rest.

The metaphors and euphemisms observed in the analyzed obituaries was done in terms of the cognitive mappings realized in the mappings for the consolatory metaphors of death as a journey, death as a joyful life, death as rest and death as a reward. These metaphors viewed death as a positive event. Metaphors mapping death as a loss and an end show the negative results of death. It is in the conceptual basis of this mapping that there lies the

fact that life is perceived to be a valuable object and death is thus seen as a loss of this valuable possession. The negative metaphors depict death as a malignant fate, an event that human beings have no control over, leaving them powerless in the face of the unavoidable event.

From the above sources, it is evident that the proposed study filled a linguistic gap by studying certain aspects that have not been delved in, especially in lexico-semantics. This study therefore intended to fill this gap by exclusively analyzing linguistic entities such as words, phrases, grammatical forms and sentences with due regard to their use in obituaries. The study endeavored to uncover the knowledge of meanings of lexical items and sentences and in overall, the obituary writers' choice of lexical items in pursuit of certain communication intentions basing on Halliday's theory of systemic functional grammar.

2.2 Lexical Choices and Meaning Making

Hudson (1984) argues that language creates reality and that language is a way of representing the world that it is used to describe. In his view, the way language is used can have an effect on the listener or reader. Language in obituaries as in any other text is used to shape ideas and beliefs about the world. Hudson's views gives justification of the present study that seeks to explore the informative perceptions behind the selection of words, phrases and clauses or sentences in the creation of reality about death.

Wells (1986) observes that the creativity of wording in sentences can have a great impact on the perception of the reader on the issues discussed in a text. This view underscores the creation of reality that Hudson (1984) talks of. Wells (1986) lays stress on how

syntactic form can enrich the textual meaning and have profound effect on the reader's perception of the texts content. The word arrangement in different patterns in a sentence has an impact on how the sentence is understood. The current study however embarks on how the lexical choices have effect on the reader's perception of death. The study examined the role of lexical items chosen and used in obituaries and their informative purpose to the reader.

Fowler (1991) observes that news items are the product of social and political worlds in which they report events. Further, Fowler (1991) asserts that language has an important function in expressing the reality of life experiences. He further observes that if laid bare, the ideologies at work in newspaper language shapes rather than mirror the world. Fowler's view strengthens Hudson's (1984) and Well's (1986) role of the power of language in creation of the reality of life. Fowler (1991) further concretizes his argument that since news is an industry with its own interests, news is a practice, the discourse that does not neutrally reflect social reality and empirical facts but rests on the social construction of reality of any given occurrence. The current study sought to contribute to Fowlers ideas by embarking on how the creation of reality is done in newspaper obituaries through lexical and clause or sentence choices in expressing the reality of death.

Hall (1992) asserts that discourse is a way of constructing meaning that organizes people's actions and the way they perceive themselves. This implies that given the mediation power of language, obituaries have a range of ways of expressing reality of death. Meaning in obituary texts can therefore be constructed in a way that determines the interpretation of readers. The present contributed to this view by clearly bringing into

focus how lexical items are used to construct meaning that can possibly influence the reader's perception of death.

In Lemke's (1992) view, all texts are a reflection of particular social realities of life and death or ideological positions put at risk by the current social contexts. That every meaning in a text occurs in a social context where alternative or contrary meaning could have been made. This means that any speaker or writer helps create the reality by lexical choices and sentences they make since they are not the only ways available for saying or writing about the issue or event at hand. This affection or disaffection with certain views in the society at that time plays a role in the choices of words made, a case that is evident in lexical choices in obituaries.

As far as Thetela (2001) is concerned, news texts are social practices in that they represent views and actions of certain social classes and groups. She argues that news is not only reported but also interpreted and its interpretation like that of any other event entails beliefs, opinions, hopes and aspirations of those reporting and those reading and how the reporting is done. The current study contributes to this view by exploring how lexical choices employed by obituary writers can bear a perception of their attitude about death.

2.3 Transitivity Processes in Obituaries

Transitivity is Halliday's term for the kind of processes and participants that occur in clauses. In transitivity, the focus falls on the predicates, usually verbs and adjectives that communicate actions, processes and states and the roles performed by the entities in these processes usually designated as nouns.

Wells (1986) observes that the creativity of wording in sentences can have great impact on the perception of the reader on the issues discussed in the text. This view underscores the creation of reality. Wells (*ibid*) lays stress on how syntactic form can enrich the textual meaning and have profound effect on the perception of the reader of the textual content. The word arrangement in different patterns in a sentence has an impact on how the sentence is understood. The current study embarks on an investigation of how lexical choices in transitivity processes arranged in obituary texts and their effects on the reader's perception of death.

A critical linguistic analysis will seek to interpret rather than to simply describe the structure of texts. Because particular linguistic codes embody particular realities, nothing in language can be regarded as truly objective and natural. Beaugrade (1981) suggests that the relation of thoughts evidently affects sentential word arrangement. This is in agreement with Malinowski (1923) who views language as a human activity in studying meaning. Malinowski (*ibid*) explains that the activities can be in terms of structure, lexical choice, decision, selections and the implications of the operations for communicative interaction. This is important as this study sought to examine at language use in obituaries as a human activity intended to communicate through lexical choices made and word structures used by the obituary writer.

Obituaries use the communication of an integrated method of both situational and notional approach in their writing so that the point of interaction is at the level of socio-psychological concept of the role of semantics. The situational approach attempts to socialize the personality of the reader as put forward by Getzels and Thelen (1972). From situational approach, it can be deduced and accepted that language is used by people to

communicate messages. In this regard, language can be manipulated, lexical items selected and social formulae introduced because they are socially useful and in this study of obituaries, we shall seek to find out what is “done” using language, particularly in an effort to express feelings about the loss through death.

The notional approach on the other hand seeks to personalize the roles so that the reader is made aware of the role the writer expects and this emerges out of necessity as a result of the emphasis as individual communication need is encouraged to modify the expectations to suit. This contains a balance of what the reader expects and what other participants in the interaction expect. The increased awareness and sensitivity of the reader will in the end result in appropriate communication (Thelen, 2001).

Thelen (*ibid*) further observes that it is worth noting that for appropriate communication to be achieved, a text discourse depends on its use in communication with minimum expenditure of effort between the two participants. Moreover, a text will be effective upon leaving a strong impression and creating favourable conditions of attaining a goal. Further, a text will be regarded as appropriate in agreement between its setting and the ways in which the standards of textuality are upheld.

Splinner (1997) in Beugrade (1981) posits that text linguistics has several aspects like; accessing and arranging ideas in an open systematic control, transition between ideas and expressions can be subjected to conscious training in expressing a given configuration of ideas, some are of higher quality than others. Judgments of a text can be made in terms of their effects upon the audience and receivers and texts are vehicles of purposeful interaction. Spliner (*ibid*) adds that a system is a set of elements in which each has a

particular function. The arrangement of lexical items in obituaries has an impact on how the obituary phrase is understood. Lexical arrangement in this study was of paramount importance.

This study seeks to describe how the lexical choices in obituaries have particular functions of distinctiveness as vehicles of purposeful interaction. This was done through the description of the language and identifying units in the system and classifying them. The uses of various lexical and transitivity processes in obituaries were analyzed in an effort to look at how effective they are in communicating the obituary writers' impression of the deceased towards the obituary reader.

2.4 Summary

The literature review on related previous research studies concerning studies on obituaries and the concept of death, language and mediation reality and text linguistics provides this study with information necessary to further build the knowledge of lexico-semantics in obituaries in the *Daily Nation* news paper. Obituaries report the occurrence of death in a unique way where it's offensive and explicit overtones are down played evoking different emotions and ways of interpretation when read. Having reviewed and found out that there exists various conceptions of death and how language is used to meditate (think and conceptualize) the reality of death, this research now moves to discuss research methodology in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study. It provides the details of the research design, the population of study, the sampling procedure and the data collection techniques. The chapter also delves into the data analysis procedure, the ethical considerations observed during the research and a section on conclusion. The study was documentary and based on secondary data basically obtained from the library.

3.1 Research Design

The research design applied in this study is the descriptive research design. The descriptive studies aim to describe lexical items accurately either through narrative type, descriptions, classifications or measuring relationships, (Terre, 2007). Descriptive research design is used in collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits and social issues (Orodho and Okombo 2002). The design involves generalization of results of the sample of the population from which it is drawn and inferences made about the characteristics, attitudes and behavior of the population (Key, 1994). This design was the best for to this study because the study analyzes obituary texts that already exist without manipulations with respect to death. Therefore, the texts were sampled and analyzed as they appeared in the *Daily Nation* newspaper in lexical items such as nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives, their meaning making process and how the syntactic patterns in the obituary texts aid in their informative purpose.

3.2 Study Area

The study was carried out by analyzing purposively sampled obituaries from the *Daily Nation* newspaper as a form of print media in Kenya. The selected form of print media has a wide range of coverage of obituaries which provided the necessary samples with the necessary lexical items and syntactic patterns to be used in the analysis.

3.3 Study Population

Following Rubin & Babbie (2001), this research considered the population as the aggregate elements from which a sample was selected. The study population was a collection of two hundred obituaries collected over a period of one and a half weeks in the month of February 2017. On each day, the *Daily Nation* newspaper carried a minimum of twenty obituaries. The obituaries were sampled from the newspapers of all the days of the week. However, the Friday obituaries selection was of great relevance here because there was usually a wide range of coverage of funeral announcements on Fridays which provided the necessary data for collection, sampling and analysis, Dyer (2008). Ary, Jacobs and Razarich (1997) argue that 10% to 20% of accessible population is acceptable for qualitative research. Similarly, Ramenyi *etal* (2003) agree that a sample size of 10% to 20% is considered adequate for in depth studies. For this reasons, the study population of twenty obituaries had to suffice for this study.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

In this study, purposive sampling technique was used. The researcher identified and selected newspaper obituaries that provided key information on adjectives, adverbs, nouns and verbs that generated the data for analysis, provided research findings. In this

study, purposive sampling was used to gather a sample of twenty obituaries. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to use cases that have required information with respect to the research objectives (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). As pointed out by Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), the purposive sampling technique allows the researcher's personal judgment of the data to be selected as a representative portion in order to cultivate an in depth understanding of the phenomena being studied. Further, as Kothari (2008) observes, that the homogeneity of the universe should be considered in sampling because if the items of the universe are homogeneous, a small sample can suffice the purpose. Milroy (1997) further notes that linguistic behavior is more homogeneous than any other type of behavior hence large samples are not necessary.

The selection followed sampling criteria which targeted the following linguistic aspects:

- i) Those that contained or entailed the lexical items of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives as open class word lexical items.
- ii) Those that encoded the reality of death, thus, the presentation of death as a reality that death should be accepted as a loss, as an event that the bereaved ought to accept though painful, death as a traumatizing experience to their loved ones as a form of comfort to the bereaved, death as a journey and death as a calamity that the deceased has no control over. All these were discussed in religious and social contexts of marriage and parenting in crafting the obituary texts under this study.
- iii) Those that had transitivity processes depicting the material processes in obituary announcement where the participant actually has an intention to perform an action, thus, they willfully engage in the action. Events where the

participant has no control over the processes they are engaged in. It also involves the mental processes where the lexical items relaying the message of death will be analyzed as behavioral, perceptive, cognitive or verbal where consciousness plays a role in perceiving death.

These three aspects provided the researcher with data on nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives that clearly targets the concept of death and its presentation in newspaper obituaries.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

Two main techniques were used to collect data in this study. They are;

Corpus Compilation, whereby corpus is defined as a body of written text or transcribed speech which can serve as a basis of linguistic analysis or description (Kennedy, 1998). From the sampled and selected obituary texts, words were picked out and a corpus of words used in the analysis. The transitivity processes from the newspaper obituaries were extracted and analyzed to bring out the informative purpose of obituaries and their contribution to the meaning making process in obituaries. A collection of linguistic data of written texts extracted from obituaries in the form of the open set lexical items of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives were extracted from the sampled obituary texts to bring out the semantic aspects involved. Through corpus compilation, lexical entities and syntactic structures that express the concept of death were analyzed.

Document compilation, such that the obituary texts were identified and selected from the *Daily Nation* newspaper then used to generate data for analysis and discussion as per the

availed appendix iv of obituaries. The data for this study was collected through extraction of the purposively sampled obituary texts.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves sifting, organizing and synthesizing the data so as to arrive at results and conclusions, (Sellinger and Shohamy, 1989). It requires the breaking down of the existing complex factors into simple parts together with new arrangements for the purpose of interpretation.

Data was qualitatively analyzed through critical examination of various obituaries sampled. The study approached the analysis of the data collected from a lexico-semantic perspective and the transitivity processes that arise. The data collected was grouped according to lexical classes and transitivity processes using content analysis.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), content analysis is a technique used for gathering and analyzing the content of a text. These can be words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs. It involved identifying the lexical features that aid in the interpretation and meaning of obituaries. The analysis involved a corpus of twenty excerpts of obituaries exhibiting adverbial modifications, adjectival descriptions, nouns and verbs indicating passage. Since our study was anchored on the role of context in meaning interpretation in obituaries, the contextual approach was of great significance in the data analysis. Cruise (1986) argues that contextual approach is extensively in the field of lexical semantics as meaning is embodied in the context. A corpus of transitivity processes were compiled for analysis using content analysis. Halliday's (1985) theory of systematic functional

linguistics was used in data analysis basing on its tenets of interpersonal, ideational and textual metafunctions, together with its derivative of transitivity.

Various sub-classes of the categories of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives were analyzed such as, those nouns that denoted misfortune, approval, comfort and calamity. Verbs indicating movement, comfort, and calamity. Adverbs of manner, time, sequence and adjectives of emotion, evaluative adjectives, psychological and those denoting endearment.

The transitivity tenet was also applied in the data analysis leading to the emergence of mental and material processes which further revealed the material action intention processes and the material action supervision processes.

3.7 Reliability and Validity of Instruments

Reliability is the degree to which a measuring procedure gives consistent results, (Postlethwate, 2005). A measuring procedure is reliable if similar results are replicated the second time following the same procedure. This being a library based documentary research, the reliability of corpus compilation and document compilation as data collection tools was ascertained by the supervisors and procedures of data collection in previous studies. This helped the researcher in capturing the use of lexical items in the obituaries and their import in the meaning making process and how the transitivity processes aid in the informative purpose of obituary texts.

Validity is the extent to which a study measures what it is intended to measure. It is the conceptual and scientific soundness of a research study, (Graziano & Raulin 2004). Items in the research instruments were discussed by the supervisors and advice given

incorporated in the instruments. Their input was incorporated in this thesis as a proof of their validity.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct this entirely library research was formally sought by the researcher from the Maseno University Ethics Review Committee. The researcher sought the permit for this study by writing to the Maseno University Ethics Review Board for the approval of this study, (see Appendix iii). Upon review and discussion, the University ethics review board issued a research permit for this study.

The study ensured confidentiality by editing the names of the deceased persons. Blurring of the obituary pictures was also done so as to protect the identities of the deceased persons in the sampled obituary texts for this study. Coding was also done for purposes of the confidentiality of this study.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodology used in this study. It describes the research design and explains the sample size and sampling procedure as well as data collection techniques used. In addition, the data analysis has also been described and the ethical considerations observed while conducting this research included. In chapter four, this study undertakes an analysis of the collected and sampled data and the necessary findings discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The main concern of this study was to undertake a lexico-semantic analysis of selected obituaries in the *Daily Nation* newspaper. This chapter dealt with data presentation, analysis and discussion of the research findings. There are two sections of data analysis incorporated in this chapter which elaborate the themes emerging in the sampled obituaries. These two sections address the research objectives: to examine the lexical choices used in newspaper obituaries, to describe how lexical choices contribute to the meaning making process in obituaries, and finally to explore how syntactic forms contribute to the informative purpose of obituaries. The themes will be explained within M.A.K Halliday's (1985) theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics with regard to the ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning making processes. The Systemic Functional theory encourages interpretation of meaning as a choice from a set of available alternatives on the basis of the potential shared between language and its users and on the basis of the context of use.

A total of twenty obituaries were purposively sampled and used for data analysis in this study. The sampled obituaries generated data which was used to advance arguments in the analysis of the lexical items used in the obituaries and their semantic interpretation. The obituaries which were purposively sampled have the lexical items which attempted to bring out the meaning making process and show how the syntactic forms aided in the informative purpose of the sampled obituaries.

4.1 Lexical Choices and Meaning Making Process

This first part of data analysis presented here addresses the first objective of this study, that is; the description of how the lexical choices contribute to the meaning making process in the sampled and analyzed obituary texts.

That language is not static is a standard assumption in linguistic inquiry. As Warren (1992) notes, new word meanings in particular contexts are constantly being created in a language. Further, Warren argues that the creation rule is governed and the acceptability of the new meanings depend for example, the strength of the ties between the novel term (in that context of death) and the referent, whether the novel term is considered to be of lasting value, that is, the referent has no other name or if the novel term is a “desirable alternative.” It is this latter situation (the desirability of the alternative) that results in the creation of new lexical items.

The power experienced in words depends on the use in which the words are put by members of the society, so that a single word used differently may have varied meanings. Obituary text is one such context where the obituary writer makes use of the bias in words to report the event of death ostensibly. Obituary writers use words to effectively achieve particular objectives like expressing grief, offering consolation to the bereaved or praise and compliment the dead. They pass judgment by referring to death as a calamity or an affliction and thus emphasize the misfortune of the deceased and the surviving family members. The *Daily Nation* newspaper usually carries obituaries that draw a different choice of lexis.

4.1.1 Nouns

According to Bolinger (1980), nouns are able to designate reality even though there is a considerable bias in them. Besides, bias is relative and nouns can best be classified in context. In the analysis of the purposively sampled obituaries, the following categories of nouns were realized from the data in an effort by the obituary writers to express the concept of death. The categories of nouns discussed here include: nouns denoting misfortune, acceptance, comfort and kinship.

4.1.1.1 Nouns indicating misfortune

(1) The phrase ..We announce the *demise* (extract 4)

In this sampled case, *demise* is an abstract noun; an option selected or chosen from an environment of other options such as **loss** and **sudden** death provided the entry condition is satisfied. The abstract noun euphemistically refers to death, that the notion of vibrancy in life has come to an abrupt end. As Rae and Marelli (2004) observe, the choice and use of the lexical item *demise* instead of directly talking about it as the *death of ...* is socially acceptable in leaving a strong impression and creating favourable conditions for attaining a communicative goal of relaying the concept of death. The use of **demise** serves to mitigate the negative emotions, reduces the impact shock and prepares one psychologically for the bad news. The choice further strips it off its most explicit and offensive overtones while retaining the communicative purpose basing on Halliday's (1985) theory of Systemic Functional linguistics. According to this theory, the ideational metafunction of language serves as a means of reflecting on things. It is the presentation of experience of a given social group about the world around them and how they

conceive the world. In this instance of using the noun *demise* as a choice instead of death, the bereaved are out to strip off the offensive and hurting feelings associated with the direct mention of the taboo word of death. Consequently, this serves to mitigate the pain and bitterness associated with the loss of a loved one. The choice of *demise* in this context conceptualizes the death phenomenon and serves to mitigate on its impact to the bereaved. It also serves as an apology for the distasteful topic and motivated by the desire for politeness in reporting a potentially hurting event or act of death, hence minimizing the perjorative strength of the taboo of death. Zhang (2008) observes that substitution is a lexical process in which an impolite or unspeakable word is replaced with certain literary mild and pleasant words or expressions. In this case of demise, substitution has been used to apply a mild term for a very harsh one of death.

In the sampled extracts below;

(2) It is with profound grief and deep **loss**... (extract 4)

(3) It is with a deep sense of **loss**... (extract 11)

The abstract noun *loss* as a lexical item denotes the action of failing to keep someone or something through death, (Oxford, 2015). Similarly, it implies a state of “no longer having”. Life is perceived as something valuable and death in this case implies a loss of this valuable person, who is the deceased. Lakoff (1980) sees life as a precious possession such that when a life is lost, those left a live regret and lament about the loss. In fact, both regret and lament are terms commonly found in obituary texts to express the grief experienced by relatives and close family members of the deceased.

Here, the death of the deceased reported in the sampled obituary texts signifies a loss to the bereaved family. The fact that the deceased was of truly cherished by the family left alive cannot be overemphasized. The loss of a loved one therefore signifies a serious setback to the progress of the bereaved family.

Halliday's (1985) theory, basing on its interpersonal function tenet views language as a means used to act on things. According to this metafunction, meaning is seen as a form of action to the reader by the writer in expressing viewpoints and attitudes about the world around the readers. The choice of the noun *loss* fulfils the interpersonal metafunction tenet as the obituary writer using this noun expresses a view point or attitude that death as reported in the obituary text makes the bereaved family miss someone valuable. It consequently creates an attitude of dislike whenever death as a word is mentioned. This assertion by Halliday (1985) ideally conforms to Allan and Burridge (1991) argument that the depiction of death as a loss, being the choice made here to communicate the occurrence of death evokes a "malignant fate". In this case, death is perceived as an event that human beings who experience it have no control over, leaving them powerless in the face of the unavoidable event.

4.1.1.2 Nouns indicating Acceptance

The plural noun **hearts** premodified by the adjective **heavy** in the extract;

(5) It is with heavy **hearts...** (extract 14)

Halliday(1985) accounts for the contextual use of language in communication, that language is a verbalized structure used to communicate meanings which arise in the

context of use to perform social functions. In the context of reporting a death occurrence, the lexical item **heavy** invokes some level of reluctance in coming to terms with the death of a loved one in the family. In this regard, the choice and use of the comparative adjective **heavy** in its positive form seeks to communicate the extent of the misfortune brought about by the death. Hearts get heavy when we cannot comprehend and easily accept or come to terms with the magnitude of certain disastrous occurrences as death. This implies that death hurts, it saddens, it is unbelievable and difficult to accept. Ongong'a (1990) observes that death is acceptable as a fate that claims the physical life of a person; it is a reality that makes us all helpless hence the appropriateness in the choice of the lexical items **heavy hearts**. Such a lexical item used is abstract, general and vague, only meant to emphasize the misfortune of the taboo of death and blur the undesirable yet explicit associations of the concept of death. Mugambi and Kirima (1982) note that there is sorrow in death because the dying person is being cut off physically from the living community. Although death is a painful experience to those left alive leading to **heavy hearts**, this reluctance to come to terms with it usually yields to **acceptance** as in;

(6) It is with deep sorrow and humble **acceptance** ... (extracts 7,12,16)

(7) It is with humble **acceptance** of God's will ... (extracts 9, 10)

In extracts 5 and 6 above, the lexical item **acceptance** which is an abstract noun semantically implies an agreement with approval of belief in something, the willingness to tolerate something unpleasant (Oxford, 2015). In this case of obituaries, the “thing” to be tolerated or approved is the death of a loved one. As used here, the choice of **acceptance** as Halliday (1985) posits, the choice and use of the noun **acceptance** is meant to make the bereaved to reflect on death and conceive it as an event or process that is

unfortunate and unwelcome. The choice of the lexical item; *acceptance* fulfils the ideational metafunction of Halliday's (1985) systemic functional linguistics theory. This is whereby language is used as a means of reflecting on things. That as much as death is a traumatizing experience, it is out of humility that the bereaved come to terms with it by accepting that it has occurred and that they have no control over it. The choice of the noun **acceptance** therefore reflects a conscious process in the perception of death. Further to this that death is a calamity, a disaster that the obituary writer, in this case the bereaved family has no control over. That the family of the deceased has therefore to agree with it or approve of it basing on the conviction that death is an eventuality or an end that they have to agree with since they have no control over it. As depicted, death is the final stage of a person's life span, an end in itself, an end to the process of human life.

The noun **celebration** was also used the sampled obituary texts as in:

(8) **Celebration** of a life well lived (extracts 1,6,11,17,18)

Celebration as a lexical invokes the full effect of acceptance of the life led by the deceased. Once you accept, you can easily celebrate. This choice is used to approve the kind of life that was well lived by the now deceased, presenting it as an occasion of joy, one that is pleasant and worth being emulated and marked in an enjoyable manner. The mapping of a life well lived to a celebration, something or an event that brings joy is meant to convey the obituary writer's perception and constitute a proof of the subjectivity attached to value of a worthwhile life. Rae and Giana (2004) argue that such lexical items provide an understanding of those who compose obituary texts in their attempt to comprehend the reality of everyday life. The ultimate choice and use of the lexical item

celebration serves the ideational metafunction of Halliday's (1985) systemic functional linguistics theory by reflecting on things, to express viewpoints and attitudes about the world around obituary readers and probably change their viewpoints, stance and attitude towards death. There is a feeling amongst the bereaved that upon death, the life led by the now deceased ought to be celebrated as one that was successful and worth emulating by those left alive. The ideational metafunction of Halliday's theory is fulfilled here as the obituary writer aims to help the reader to reflect and change their attitude about death. That as much as one is dead, there is need to reflect on the lives they led and strive to emulate the positive attributes they exhibited as you celebrate. This indicates that as much as death is a painful event in the lives of those left alive, the bereaved have an obligation to celebrate the life that was lived or led by the deceased during their earthly existence as a consolation and contemplation of the purity and virtues of the deceased. The celebrations should be done bearing in mind that the virtuous actions of the deceased while they were alive and their general service to humanity. The celebrations are marked by those alive firmly grounded in the hope that the deceased is said to be "enjoying" the fruits of a well spent life in the eternity of happiness, an indicator of the view of death as a desirable event.

4.1.1.3 Nouns Indicating Emotion

The choice of the nouns denoting emotions indicate how intimate and personal the deceased was to the bereaved. Further to this, the nouns can be analyzed in continuum with regard to the degree or intensity they exhibit while reporting death in a given obituary text.

The use of the abstract noun **sorrow** preceded by the positive form of the adjective **deep** shows a more personal and intimate use of the lexical expression in which feelings and emotions of the obituary writer play a significant role in reporting the death as presented in the extract. It is with **deep sorrow...** (extracts 7, 12 and 16). The abstract noun **sorrow** signifies a feeling of sadness that arises when we lose a loved one through death. It shows that death is an emotional event that hurts.

The superlative form of the positive adjective **deep** in this case **deepest** is used predicatively in the sampled obituary texts. In the extract; it is with **deepest sorrow...** (7,12,17). The predicative use of the superlative adjective **deepest** before the abstract noun **sorrow** is used to show the immeasurable effects of death that is reported to have occurred. The death is incomprehensible to the bereaved family. The loss of their loved one is quite incomparable.

Further to the aforementioned nouns, in the obituary extract **It is with deep and profound grief**, the predicative adjective **profound** modifies the abstract noun **grief**. This is meant to signify the intensity of the loss as grave and quite incomprehensible, difficult to come to terms with. It is quite intense to accept its occurrence.

Through such lexical choices, Hernando (2001) observes that obituaries constitute a hybrid genre in which both emotion and publicity go hand in hand. Through the choice of items grief and sorrow, the intimate and personal feelings and emotions of the obituary writer come to the fore.

As Ongong'a (1990) observes, death arouses many emotions, the most common being those of grief and sorrow. That death tears people away from all they love and know in

this world. The tragedy of death is one of the greatest wicked aspects of life. Further to this is that the death of a person causes immeasurable pain that is difficult to bear with. Death is an unbearable eventuality that is always difficult to fathom. It causes great sadness, it hurts when a loved one passes on from their midst. This fulfils the interpersonal metafunction of Halliday's (1985) theory in which language is used as a means of acting on things in its presentation of experience. The interpersonal metafunction of language propounds that meaning is a form of action such that the writer or speaker does something to the reader or listener by means of language. In the use of the abstract nouns **grief and sorrow**, the obituary writer seeks to act on the emotions of the obituary reader. The writer does something to the reader by means of language. It depicts the obituary writer's attitude about death, that death is a malignant event that evokes deep grief and sorrow as emotional experiences of the bereaved. Feeling grief and sorrow are conscious processes that reflect the reality of death. As Bultnick (1998) indicates, death is an emotion arousing episode that causes loss of valuable possession. That death is an agonizing experience to those left alive, quite difficult to come to terms with. Death is perceived as a calamity that robs us of a valuable one, causing grief and sorrow.

4.1.1.4 Nouns Indicating Comfort

The following cases with the abstract nouns *eternity and glory* were extracted from the sampled obituary texts;

(12) Transition to **eternity** (extract 12)

(13) Ascending to **glory** (extract 9)

(14) Promotion to **glory** (extract 14)

(15) Heavenly **glory** (extract 17)

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2005) defines eternity as a time without an end, one that is infinite, and one that is endless. Glory conceptualizes a destiny of honor, fame and great pride. The comfort and happiness deciphered from these lexical items in reporting a death occurrence in obituaries down plays or mitigates the grief and pain associated with death, hence making death be perceived as a desirable event, closely related to acceptance in people's lives. This consoles and gives hope to the bereaved family.

Conviction in life after death is shown through the choice of lexical items such as **glory** and **eternity**, serves to fulfill the interpersonal metafunction tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory where language is seen as a means of doing things, that is, the form of action of the writer or speaker to a reader or listener, in this case the obituary author to the reader, in the sense that the speaker or writer does something to the reader or listener by means of language. In depicting death in obituaries both as **glorious and eternal**, the obituary writer acts on the reader's feelings by means of language. It makes the readers perceive death positively to be an endless eventuality to a destiny of fame and great pride. In this case, the bereaved ought to positively conceptualize death as a reward worth striving to go for. The application of the aforementioned nouns in the context of death consequently serves to comfort the bereaved that even in death, all is well. In this case, they depict the destination of the deceased upon death as a destiny that is beautiful, enjoyable and pleasant, devoid of suffering. Further, the lexical choices of **glorious, eternal** and **glory** conceptualize human mortality as a departure from this world. Death is viewed as a journey to the greater beyond, to a better and comfortable destiny. Death is eternal life.

As Wheller (1994) observes such lexical items as **eternity** and **glory** offer consolation to the bereaved based on the hope of resurrection of the dead, a belief that meant taking a completely new existence.

4.1.1.5 Nouns denoting Kinship terms

In extract 13 of the sampled obituary text; (16) Great grandma to a **multitude**.... The collective noun **multitude** denotes a large number of family, relatives and kin of the deceased. It implies that the deceased has left many brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles and in-laws. By using this collective noun, the obituary writer fulfils Halliday's (1985) interpersonal metafunction of the theory in which language is viewed as a means of acting on things. Meaning is seen as a form of action such that the writer does something to the reader by means of language. Through this tenet, language is used to establish and maintain social relationships, express viewpoints and attitudes to the reader. By using the collective noun **multitude**, the choice of this lexicon portrays death as an individual's journey towards one's maker. It is a journey, and it necessitates that others will be left behind and they will hopefully experience the same journey once they die. This choice is meant to act on the attitude of the bereaved and the obituary readers on their perception of death, that death is for all of us, no one is immortal.

4.1.2 Verbs

This section addresses the following types of verbs that emerge from the analyzed data: verbs denoting movement, verbs indicating comfort and verbs indicating commitment.

Verbs are less effective to bias because their nature allows for relative transition about what they name. Verbs may be situational or depend on the writer's view of reality.

However, some verbs are factual whether they refer to bad things or not, (Bolinger, 1980). The following categories of verbs were extracted from the sampled obituaries:

4.1.2.1 Verbs Denoting Movement

The verbal groups ideally denote that the deceased has embarked on a journey to a destiny of comfort, being projected here as an act of movement from one state to another, that is transition from life to death. In this case, death is conceptually mapped to a journey. The use of these verbs shows death as a journey movement in a continuum.

The first step in any given journey or movement is the act of **being called** as in the passive construction in the phrase **Was called** (extract 5,7). In this passive construction, the doer of the action is not mentioned but in the context of death and obituary writing, the influence of the supernatural power is significant in the process of calling. Contrastively, in **God called our mum...** (extract 15), the doer of the action, God, which is mentioned.

The second stage in a movement process is the act of **going**. When one is called, they set off or go as in the context of **The going home of...** (extract 17). Once the dead is gone, it implies that they have **passed on** (extract 4). The passing on is a transition as captured in **transition to eternity...** (extract 12). In this case, this is transition to the afterlife, the destination being heaven. The heavens are above, so the deceased has to ascend as depicted in the extract **Ascending to glory...** (extract 8). When the deceased ascend, it amounts to a **promotion** to glory as in **promotion to glory...** (extract 10, 14). This upward movement depicted in various lexical items presents a Judeo-Christian reality that

Heaven is above the skies, so when one dies, their souls go to heaven and for the bad people, they descend to hell.

The choice of the verb **ascending**, which according to the Oxford dictionary (2015) implies **going up** and in the context of death and obituary writing, to a destiny of fame, honour and great pride. **Transition** indicates the process of change, the deceased moves from the physical state of a human being to the spiritual state. The verb **promotion** implies a movement to a destiny of belonging, a better home, in this case, the highest abode with the supernatural power.

These verbs have been used in obituaries to conceptualize human mortality as a departure from the earthly world, presenting death as a journey. Halliday's (1985) theory with its ideational metafunction tenet accounts for this. This tenet propounds that people use language to make meanings and that language is used as a means of reflecting on world or for social experiences. Through these verbs denoting movement, death is conceived as a journey to an eternal destiny of beauty and comfort hence consoling and giving hope to the bereaved that their deceased loved ones are in a better place.

Wheeler (1994) notes that the invocation of faith are motivated by religious beliefs, that religion determined much of the language used in the obituary, these faith invocations not only provided a reason for living but also for dying.

Further to this, Fernerdez (2006) observes that these lexical items such as **was called**, **transition**, **ascending** and **promotion** constitute euphemistic verbs as the deceased correspond to the person that has been capable of embarking on a journey. The dying

person is supposed to have moved to a spirit state and for this reason, considered to be somehow alive, watching over those left alive.

Halliday (1985) attests that the functional theory is a theory about meanings. It is concerned with relating the grammar of a language to major functions and seeks to understand why particular linguistic patterns are found in terms of their social and communicative needs it is called upon to serve. This therefore fulfills the function of the verbs denoting movement that show the departure of the deceased from the earthly life. This is meant to substitute the notion of death, consequently serving to console the bereaved and give them hope that their deceased kin is in a better place, free from earthly pain, struggles and suffering.

The lexical choices of *transition*, *ascending* and *promotion* are closely linked to the norms of politeness and style. Their use in obituaries is meant to mitigate the effects and perception of death, consequently providing relief in the face of death, exemplifying the observations by Brown, cited in Rawson (1985) that people die, they pass over like Adam, they pass over, they go home, they are carried to rest, they fall asleep... anything but the plain fact of death.

As Fan (2008) observes, word meanings depend on the context and it is important to keep in mind that the intention of the speaker or writer to be respectful was largely responsible for the choice of the expression and the positive connotations or attributes that are associated with expressing death as a transition or promotion to glory.

4.1.2.2 Verbs Indicating Comfort

According to Mugambi and Kirima (1982), in many African communities, death is believed to be a temporary departure and not a complete end. There is belief in ancestors and that their spirits are always with us, emphasizing the notion of life after death. The person who has died is believed to have moved to join the company of those who have gone before them, which ideally offers comfort and rest. In this regard therefore, verbs as lexical items have been chosen and used in obituary texts to conceptualize death as a desirable condition, a peaceful repose after earthy existence, as an event that is less threatening and normal. Considering the following expressions from sampled obituaries;

Celebrating the life of.... (extract 5)

Announce the **resting** of (extract 1)

She will be laid to **rest** (extract 1)

In God's hand you **rest** (extract 4)

Are welcome to **honour**..... (extract 10)

The Mbithi family **celebrates**... (extract 13)

The choice of the verbs; *celebrating*, in the present continuous tense and *celebrates* in the present tense are meant to exemplify death as a joyous, pleasant and rewarding experience worth deriving pleasure from as it brings feelings of happiness and comfort to the living. The ideational metafunction of Halliday's(1985) theory is exemplified in the use of these verbs. The verbs **celebrate** and **celebrating** presents a reflection of the experiences of the bereaved as a social group and how they perceive the world of death around them. The celebrations by the bereaved family are meant to show the joy and happiness brought following a reflection of the life lived by a loved one, now the

deceased. The joy that brings about the celebrations is as a result of a successful and exemplary life led by the deceased. Upon their death, the kind of lives they led is worth a celebration. This is further exemplified in eulogy booklets during funeral services. In them, people share the images of a person's life, the good times and never photos of the morgue and the graveyard. This therefore shows that we celebrate life and not death. The choice of these verbs present positive overtones to ameliorate the pain of losing a loved one, that the death of a loved one can be celebrated as it is viewed as a source of joy, giving hope and consolation to the bereaved.

The verb *honour* is a choice in the phrase; Are welcome to **honour** ... (extract 10) indicates showing respect to the deceased in the context of death and obituary writing. Honouring a personality is an event that brings joy, denoting feelings of happiness and reward. The interpersonal metafunction tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory posits that language is a means of acting on things. In this case, language is seen as a means of action that the writer does to the reader. By opting to use the verb **honour** in the obituary text, the bereaved seek to express a cherishing attitude towards the deceased because of the earthly lives they led and the achievements they made. This calls for respect and a joyous reflection. Such choice of a verb shows a state of comfort in celebrating the life and times of the deceased. Further to this, Hall's (1992) observation that discourse is a way of constructing meaning that organizes people's actions and the way they perceive themselves. In this case, language is used in obituaries to express the reality of death. Language here is constructed to determine the behavior and the interpretation of life issues. In using the verb **honour**, the obituary writer seeks to conform to Hall's (1992)

idea that the choice of a lexical item seeks to influence the reader's perception of death as a joyous reflection worth being marked.

Obituary writers also resorted to choices of verbs that shift the lexical level to cope with the taboo of death by means of technical words where death is substituted by verbs such as *resting* and *rest* as in:

We announce the **resting** (extract 1)

She will be laid to **rest** (extracts 1,2,3,5)

The choice of these verbs conceptualize death as a desirable event, one that is temporary, less threatening and very normal as the deceased is said to be relaxing or in a state of repose hence mitigating the negative impacts and perceptions associated with the pains of losing a loved one by portraying death as a state of *rest*, a form of comfort that the deceased is in. According to Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics theory, language is viewed as a system and a system is a fundamental concept in the description of grammar. To Halliday, system is a set of options and thus meaning is interpreted as a choice. By choosing to use the verbs; **rest** and **resting** respectively, the writer has in this case made distinct choices. Instead of openly and plainly mentioning **death**, they chose on using alternative options In the event of denoting death as **a rest**, the obituary writer sought to communicate that the deceased is in a better state, free from life's bondages, struggles and suffering. This therefore serves the basic function of consoling the bereaved. In as much as their kin is deceased, the act of losing them, which is a painful experience, they should not have hurt feelings as the deceased is in a state of rest and relaxation, which is better.

Zhang (2008) argues that death is the most terrible event to human beings since it means the end of existence and as a consequence, it is a forbidden taboo in almost every culture. The mention of the word arouses trauma, fear or phobia that frightens people. Deaths reported in obituaries therefore assume a variety of decent and better sounding verbs such as **resting** to refer to a death occurrence to make death sound more pleasant and avoid the harsh and distasteful reality of a loss experienced by the bereaved. It masks the bitter reality of death by giving it a better face. The reluctance to speak about human mortality is symptomatic of the overall discomfort with the subject of death as a whole.

Further, the choice of the verb **resting** to refer to the taboo of death is not merely a response to the forbidden subject, but rather provides a way to speak about the taboo, about the unspeakable, about the concepts removed from our consciousness. As Button (1960) notes, obituary text writers have tried to be modest, pitiful and pleasant in reporting of death hence consoling with the bereaved.

Referring to death as a **rest** implies that death is a peaceful, temporary repose after earthly existence further enhancing Nyakoe's (2011) argument and reference to death as a rest, ultimately leading to the denial of death, that the dying person is no longer dead but in deep comforting sleep. Death is conceptualized in the metaphor of rest. In this case death is a desirable condition, a peaceful and temporary repose after earthly existence.

Fowler (1996) observes that when we speak or write about something, the words we choose and the structures of our sentences convey an implicit analysis of the topic and an attitude towards it. In view of this, the options of verbs denoting comfort such as **resting**, **rest** and **celebration** seek to portray death as a normal occurrence that is less threatening

hence mitigating the negative impacts and pains associated with death. The depiction of death as a celebration presents death as a joyful event, in this case giving hope and consolation to the bereaved family.

4.1.2.3 Verbs Denoting the Struggles of life

In extract 11, **You have fought a good fight and finished the race.** The verb **fight** metaphorically captures life as a fight. In other words, a struggle full of challenges that the deceased went through successfully while alive. This indicates that the deceased was a character full of determination, sacrifice and persistence and that is why they are portrayed as having successfully **fought** and finished the race. In this context, race being the competition between life and death. The death of the deceased person in this obituary announcement is a painful and devastating occurrence to the bereaved. As the ideational metafunction tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory postulates, language is a means of reflecting on social realities. It is essentially the presentation of experience of a given social group about the world around them and how they conceive it. Consequently, the death of loved ones who fought battles and finished the race as in the context of this obituary presents an experience worth sacrifice and determination to have been accomplished. In this case, it is an event worth reflection and emulation by those left alive and to the general obituary readers. In as much as their kin is dead, their earthly deeds and spirit of commitment in their course of life, one that was led without giving up hence worth emulation. The use of this verbal group seeks to console and encourage the bereaved to bear with life's challenges. It should be a reminder to them that upon death, they shall be regarded as having navigated their earthly battles and challenges successfully, consequently serving as examples worth emulation by those alive.

4.1.3 Adverbs

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1979), adverbs perform semantic functions in their contextual usage. They express place, manner, direction, time and degree. Generally speaking, the choice of the adverbials in reporting a death occurrence pre-empts the fact that time, place, manner are important components in obituary texts, affirming the importance of when, where and why the death occurred. Considering the sampled adverbial modifications in the following extracts;

Who passed **peacefully** (extract 7)

On the morning of ... (extract 19)

On Monday... (extract 20)

Following an operation... (extract 14)

Robert was loving, generous and adventurous and lived his life **fully**... (extract 19). There is the choice and use of the adverb of manner **fully**. Fully is synonymous with completely or entirely, (Oxford). This choice of the adverbial aims to emphasize the kind of life that was led by the deceased while still on earth. The adverb further serves to compliment the deceased by considering upgrading the desirable features of the referent, in this case of the obituary, the deceased. The adverb presents a true display of the admirable personal qualities of the deceased. The ideational metafunction tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory views language as a means of reflecting on things. Language is used to present a peoples experience and how they conceive the world around them. In the use of the adverbial **fully**, the obituary writers in this case present a conscious process of their perception of the life that the deceased lived while alive. Within the parameters of the ideational

metafunction tenet, the choice of the adverbial serves to help the bereaved family and other obituary readers to consciously reflect on the life of the deceased who exemplified personal qualities worth emulating. From the semantic resources, the truthful depiction of the life led by the deceased as one that was fully lived fulfills the mitigating function against the pain and sorrow caused by the taboo of death by considerably upgrading the desirable attributes of the deceased. In this case, it not only complements but also praises and magnifies the biological act of dying, something which supposes the fulfillment of happiness. The choice serves to compliment the deceased as having led a successful life which leads the deceased to die **peacefully**.

The adverb of manner, *peacefully* used in ... *Who passed peacefully* (extract 7) seeks to reflect an idealized concept of “good death”, that there was no struggle in the process of death. The death was welcome by the deceased and that no one should complain or lament about it. The adverbial **peacefully** is a choice made in an effort to console the bereaved that the deceased is in a better place, a state of repose, rather than the earthly life full of pain and suffering. The use of the adverb **peacefully** contrasts with the use of the adverbs tragically or sadly which also elaborate on the manner the deceased met their death. In this case, the death was sudden and unwelcome that it left the bereaved family in tears. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) posit, such an adverb as *peacefully* serves to portray death as a desirable event under the influence of religious beliefs, hence offering consolation and assurance to the bereaved family. Similarly, the ideal of a joyful life, one that is peaceful and everlasting existence with God in Heaven conceptualizes death as a joyful and peaceful undertaking.

This choice and use of the adverb *peacefully* serves to fulfill Halliday's (1985) interpersonal metafunction tenet of the theory. This theory propounds that meaning is a form of action that a speaker does something to the reader by use of language. In this case, language is used to express their viewpoints and attitudes about the world and possibly change their perception about the death occurrence. In the use of the adverb **peacefully**, the obituary writer seeks to console the bereaved to accept the fact that as much as death is a loss, a mysterious experience, one that concerns and emotionally touches every member of the society, the use of the adverb "**peacefully**" serves to change the obituary readers perspective, stance and attitude about death to be an experience and encounter in the life of the deceased as one that is not destructive. Rae & Giana's (2004) study revealed the most important beliefs of our society holds about our lives and deaths. In this regard, the use of the adverb of manner "peacefully" aids the bereaved in communicating their feelings about the death of their loved one. The bereaved regard death as a natural phenomenon that cannot be resisted and therefore accepting it is important.

The use of the temporal adverbial phrases: **On the morning of ...** and **On Monday...** mark the importance of time in the conception of death. They show that we are living on borrowed time, once our time on earth is up, we die. This is why the date and time come in the expressions of death. They indicate when the death occurred, the day or the time a person died. They are chosen and used in the obituary texts to show how personal and subjective the announcement of the death of the deceased is presented. The subjectivity in the use of these adverbials of time indicates the emotional attachment that is associated with the particular days (Monday) and time (morning) that the deaths of their kin

occurred. The days and time are memorable and that cannot easily fade from the minds of the bereaved. They remind them of the agony and pain of losing cherished ones at those times. The experience of the bereaved and how they conceived the calamity of death is best captured through the use of these adverbials hence fulfilling the ideational metafunction of language as per Halliday's (1985) theory. This is a way of reflecting on the manner of death.

Death is caused by an agent or an event such as ailments, accident and heart attack. There is usually a cause or reason of death. The use of the adverb of sequence *following...* (extract 14) in this case, death was a consequence of an unsuccessful operation, that the death was as a result of the operation. This explicitly gives the cause of the death being announced. The mention of the reason behind the death reported in these obituaries seeks to express the sad emotional attachment that comes with the death of a loved one. To the bereaved, had the operation been successful, their kin would not have died. The result of the operation is a source of pain to the bereaved. Halliday's (1985) theory views language as a verbalized structure used to communicate meanings which arise in the context of use. Emphasis is on how people use language to make meanings as they carry out their activities. This adverb of sequence performs a consolatory function by justifying the reason behind the reported death. That it was beyond the control of the kin and as a matter of fact, there is need to accept the reality of the death and come to terms with it.

The use of such adverbial modifications, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) views death as a desirable event under the influence of beliefs, hence offer some consolation to those alive. Similarly, the ideal of a joyful life that is peaceful and everlasting existence with God in Heaven conceptualizes death as a joyful and peaceful undertaking.

4.1.4 Adjectives

This study investigated the adjective class as a lexical entity used in the communicative and informative purpose of the obituary text. As Fernandez (2006) observes, superlative adjectives also amount to a true expression of the life of the deceased. They constitute laudatory or praise devices in an account of the earthly life of the deceased. The obituary writer is likely to use overstatements in an attempt to display the social worth of the deceased. The obituary reader is expected to accept the information as a means of consolatory praise in the context of obituary writing.

The following categories of adjectival modifications were identified in the sampled data:

4.1.4.1 Adjectives Denoting Emotion

Life is perceived to be a valuable or precious possession in the conceptual metaphor terms, (Lakoff 1993). The death of a loved one is therefore conceived as a loss to the bereaved family. It is equally a setback in their progress when a cherished one exits their midst.

As Allan and Brudge (1991) observe, death is a loss that evokes a malignant fate, an event that human beings cannot control, leaving them powerless in the face of the unavoidable event. Nyakoe (2011) posits that lexical expressions are used to indicate the pain and agony that death causes to the bereaved family by taking the beloved ones from among us.

The choice of the adjective **fallen to** modify the noun **soldier** in the extract;

Are welcome to honour this great **fallen** soldier... (extract 10)

The adjective **fallen** shows the death of a loved one in the family. Giving it a general linguistic interpretation that staying alive is a battle or competition while dying is the loss of the war, succumbing to death. It signifies defeat and also the likely state or condition of having been wounded by the opponent that the soldier is with at war. The choice of the adjective **fallen** intensifies the misfortune or the affliction that comes with the painful experience of losing a loved one. Halliday's (1985) theory upon which this study is grounded lays emphasis on system as a fundamental concept in the description of grammar. In this regard, a system is viewed as a set of options where meaning is interpreted as a choice. By the obituary writer opting for the adjective **fallen**, to euphemistically refer to death, they have made a choice and used it in the context of communication. In this case, its choice and use is a better option rather than explicitly mentioning the term of death. This euphemistic usage is meant to mitigate the negative impacts associated with death. As a result, this consoles the bereaved family. Lemke (1992) posits that all texts are a reflection of particular social realities and positions of interpretation depend on the social context. By choosing the adjective **fallen**, in the context of reporting a death, it depicts its appropriateness in obituary writing.

Death has been presented in the sampled obituaries as a loss whereby those left alive regret and lament about it. The obituary pages stress the grief experienced by the relatives and friends of the deceased, as in;

It is with **profound** and a **deep** (extract 4)

It is with **deepest** sorrow... (extract 19)

The choice and use of the adjectival *profound* which according to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2015) denotes a high degree, that is intense, extreme a very great emotion and feeling shows the impact caused by the loss of a loved one. *Deep* signifies an occurrence that is extreme, hurting and one which comes with painful experiences. The superlative adjective *deepest* that is predicatively used before the noun *sorrow* indicates the immeasurable effects of death, effects that are beyond the comprehension of the bereaved family.

The adjectives **deep** and **profound** in the case of obituaries above denote the emotional expressions and attachment associated with the death occurrences, displaying the magnitude or intensity of the loss, that is, the irreversible emotional damage caused by the death of a loved one. To the bereaved, death is unimaginably destructive. The ideational metafunction tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory propounds that language is a means of reflecting on things and presenting experiences. The use of such adjectives brings into focus the real consequences of death. That death is a painful experience to bear with by the bereaved family. This essentially shows the intensity of the calamity of losing a loved one. The use of emotional adjectives; **deep** and **profound** is meant to show how grave the loss of a loved one is. Their death is an emotional encounter that touches the feelings of the bereaved. Death is incompressible, an act that the bereaved take time to come to terms with. Their use is further meant to pass the message of death and influence the attitude of the obituary readers, making them view death as a cruel occurrence with devastating emotional effects.

Superlative adjectival descriptions also express the magnitude of the emotional damage caused by the death of a loved one. In the phrase; **It is with deepest sorrow...** (extract

19). The superlative form of the adjective **deep**, in this case, **the deepest** denotes the magnitude of the pain experienced with the loss of a loved one. The pain of the loss is presented as one that is difficult to bear with. This is meant to portray death as a calamity that leaves the bereaved family and friends powerless. The obituary writer resorts to such superlative forms of adjectives in order to display the social worth of the deceased. The obituary **deep** reader on the other hand is thus expected to accept the information as a means of consolatory praise in an effort to mitigate the potential painful effects of losing a loved one. Halliday (1985) tenet of the interpersonal function posits that language is a means of acting on things, that the writer does something to the reader by means of language. The use of the superlative adjective; deepest shows the expression of the pain experienced of the loss by the bereaved.

The adjectives; **profound**, and the superlative form **deepest** are used to stress the grief experienced by the family, relatives and friends of the deceased. Death is presented and viewed as a loss, that those left alive regret and lament of it. The choice of the above lexical items stresses the grief experienced by the surviving family members. As Nyakoe (2011) notes, these lexical choices indicate the pain and agony that the death of the deceased causes to the bereaved family following the loss of a valuable and cherished family member.

In the phrase; **It is with heavy hearts** (extract 14), the adjective **heavy** pre- modifies the plural noun **hearts** to imply that the death reported is one that is difficult to accept and come to terms with, quite unbelievable and that it saddens and hurts. It is understood as a loss resulting into a lot of pain and agony to the surviving family. Something **heavy** is equally unbearable, (Oxford, 2015). Through the use of the regular adjective **heavy**, the

obituary writer seeks to represent an experience of a social group about the world around them, the world of death, and how they conceive it. In this case, the sense of the content word **heavy** represents a process of consciousness that denotes the feeling of losing a family member and this satisfies Halliday's (1985) proposal that in the Systemic Functional Linguistics theory that language is a verbalized structure used to communicate meanings in the context of use, focus being on how people use language to make meanings with each other as they carry out their communicative activities. In choosing to use the adjective heavy in its positive form, preceding the plural noun, hearts, the obituary writer seeks to show the impact of the loss of a loved one. Here, the death of a loved one is a calamity, a conscious burden difficult to bear. Death is thus a tragedy. Lemke (1992) posits that any speaker or writer helps create the reality by the choice of words and sentences they make. He further observes that meaning in a text occurs in a social context where alternative meaning could have been made. In the context of this obituary writing, the choice of the adjective "**heavy**" heightens the degree of the loss of a loved one, the pain and agony that comes with death, hence presented as a burden heavy to bear by the bereaved family.

The adjectival *tragic* and *brutal* in the phrases: ... **brutal murder** (extract 12) and ...**through a tragic road accident** (extract 16). Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2015) defines **tragic** as an occurrence that is fatal and unfortunate that cause great sadness. **Brutal** refers to a cruel manner, actions that are merciless and harsh.

The lexical choices of *tragic* and *brutal* show the manner in which the reported deaths occurred, that the deaths were untimely, uncalled for and unexpected, coming with a lot of pain. The choice of such adjectival portraying emotion of sadness and pity. As the

ideational metafunction of Halliday's (1985) theory posits, language is a means of reflecting on things and that language helps present the experiences of a social group of the world around them and how to conceive the same. The actions of being tragic and brutal indicate the cruel nature of the hand of death. The bereaved are presented as victims at a loss of those they value and cherish. They are meant to show death as a calamity, an affliction that results in the ultimate end of a valuable person or possession. As Hudson (1984) posits, language creates reality and that language is a way of presenting the world that is used to describe it. In this way, language has an effect on the listener or reader. By the writer choosing to use the adjectives; **heavy** and **tragic**, they seek to present the reality of life by showing death as cruel and one that occurs unexpectedly hence painful and agonizing to the bereaved.

Death can also be relayed in given obituary texts by contrasting the fore mentioned negative emotions such as **heavy**, **deep**, **deepest**, **tragic** and **fallen** which evoke sadness to more positive adjectives that reassure the bereaved and offer a new dimension towards accepting death as part and parcel of life.

Further, considering the adjectival **humble** used in the following extracts;

It is with **humble** acceptance ... (extract 1,6,7,9,)

It is with **humble** acceptance of God's will (extract 12, 16, 17)

The loss of a cherished family member affects the bereaved emotionally lowers the social esteem and self worth of the bereaved. It makes them the least proud and they portray themselves with a low or modest opinion of their own importance. That death makes those left alive feel devoid of self worth, that they are not any important in the eyes of

God, their creator. The choice in expressing and reporting about the death of a loved one as a humbling experience is meant to exemplify the emotionally devastating consequences of death. As Halliday (1985) posits through the ideational metafunction, language is a means of reflecting on things and presenting experiences. Through the choice of the adjective **humble**, the author of this obituary text sought to present their experience as a social group about the world of death and how they conceive it around them at that particular point in time. The adjective presents the reality of death as one that ideally makes the bereaved have a modest view of themselves as persons that are subject to the cruel hand of the fateful experience of death. As Mugambi and Kirima (1982) observe, death is accepted as fate, with which every individual must struggle to face individually. This struggle between death and the individual is very significant in African beliefs because the relatives, friends and also the dying person are all helpless when death claims the physical life of a person, and in this manner, the role of the supernatural plays a significant role in humbling the emotive tones of the bereaved.

4.1.4.2 Evaluative Adjectives

According to Fernandez (2007), obituaries use words that perform a perlocutionary function, that is, in the case of obituaries, they are oriented towards causing a favorable impression on the reader by showing the social status and the exemplary behavior of the deceased, which is usually reported with emotive overtones.

Certain adjectives used in the sampled obituaries can be perceived as those which give an opinion or judgment about the deceased with regard to the kind of lives the deceased led

in relation to those left alive. Considering the following sampled data from the selected obituary texts;

A **dedicated** teacher ... (extract 9)

An **icon**... (extract 1)

After 86 **glorious** years... (extract 1)

Robert was **generous** ... (extract 19)

The use of the adjectival *dedicated*, indicates or implies a personality who was hard working, committed, selfless and one who had passion and love for his job as a teacher for the sake of the success of others. After 86 *glorious* years describe and signify a life period of success, one that brought fame, glory and joy to those having interacted with the deceased on their earthly stay. That the deceased touched many lives through her actions and positive and worthwhile contribution to humanity. This can be subjectively interpreted by the obituary reader that she was viewed as a mother figure. An **icon** is considered a worthy person, one who was considered sacred, holy and a symbol of magnificence, great fame and beauty. A role model to the bereaved family and the society at large because of her unmatched success and or achievements, (Oxford, 2015).

In the sampled texts, the deceased as **an icon** (extract 1), it depicts a famous person or a thing that people admire and see as a symbol of a particular idea or way of life (Oxford, 2015). By describing the deceased as an icon, the obituary writer seeks to exemplify their earthly personality attributes, those that basically entailed their commitment to a just cause of the life that they led. The use of the adjective icon attempts to praise and compliment the deceased. The ideational metafunction of language as per Halliday's (1985) theory posits that language is a means of reflecting on things. Here, language is

used to present experiences of a social group and how they conceive the world. This is fulfilled through this choice of the evaluative adjective, **icon** to describe the kind of personality that the deceased was. In this case, language is used as a means of reflecting on the kind of life that was led by the deceased. The said adjectival serves to present the experience of the bereaved as they ponder on the role of the deceased while alive which they shall dearly miss.

The adjective **blessed** used in the biblical verse in **Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.... (extract 6)** is an evaluative adjective that denotes a person who is held in divine aid, protection or blessing. It is a title given to those who have lived in sanctity and are considered holy, (Oxford, 2015). Such an adjective describes the character of the deceased in the obituary text while they were still alive. The adjective evaluates the character as having been exemplary and worth emulation in life. The use of this evaluative adjective in the biblical quote in extract 6 sought to praise and compliment the deceased, at the same time consoling the bereaved that because of the righteous life that the deceased led, they are experiencing a safe rest for their good deeds. This helps fulfill the ideational metafunction of the systemic functional theory that the lexical item used helps reflect on the exemplary life of the deceased.

In the sampled case of **Robert was a generous...** (extract 19), being generous is an act of being benevolent, it describes one who readily and freely offers material and financial help and assistance to others in their times of need. It entails showing kindness in ones attitude in the treatment of others (Oxford, 2015). The reference of the deceased as having been generous signifies a personality worth being emulated, that in life, we ought to be benevolent and helpful towards others, those that are needy, whenever we are in a

position to help, just the same way the deceased is depicted to have done. The interpersonal metafunction tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory which posits that language in a particular social context serves to present the experiences of a social group and how they conceive the world around them is fulfilled through the choice of this adjectival. That language is used to express a people's view point, that human kind ought to live generous lives as a social value or character that is admirable and worth emulation in the society and that living such a life is socially fulfilling.

This is in agreement with Thetela's (2001) argument that news texts are social practices in that they represent the views and actions of certain social classes or groups. The choice of evaluative adjectives as lexical items in obituary texts tends to portray emotions, provide relief and praise the deceased. They make obituaries subjective as they offer a more intimate and emotive account by means of consolatory and laudatory tactics to compliment the departed and in so doing satisfy and console the surviving family members.

4.1.4.3 Consolatory Adjectives

Bolinger (1980) argues that from a christian-religious dimension or point of view, death is regarded to as a joyful life that is peaceful and an everlasting experience and existence with God in heaven. Considering the following extracts from the obituaries;

Was called to the *glorious presence* ... (extract 2)

To his *glorious presence* (extract 3, 15)

... to *eternal* rest

The Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary (2015) defines the term **glory** as a situation that deserves or brings fame and success. It is a beautiful and impressive place that is extremely enjoyable. In the domain of reporting a funeral, the adjective **glorious** is used to refer to the spiritual destiny, the pleasant place, magnificent, of great pride and honour, devoid of pain and suffering. Psychologically, the bereaved view and are convinced that the deceased is in a better place upon death, devoid of pain and suffering, hence the adjectival serves the purpose of consoling and reassuring the bereaved.

An eternal destiny is one that has no end, is endless, one which exists and continues forever, (Oxford, 2015). The reference to death as an **eternal** rest where the adjective eternal premodifies the noun rest captures death as a welcome event in a person's life, one that is without a beginning or end, lasting and existing forever hence politely conceiving death as a less threatening event, a very normal stage in a person's life. To Halliday (1985) theory, the interpersonal metafunction depicts that language choice is meant to act as a means of acting on things. Through language, the writer does something to the reader; thus, language is action oriented. Through the conscious process, the bereaved use the adjectival **glorious** and **eternal** to in a consolatory manner connote death as a form of comfort or repose worth enjoyment by the deceased. This mitigates the potential effects associated with the adverse and painful connotations associated with death.

The choice of the adjectives with positive overtones to diffuse the pain of losing a loved one.

4.1.4.4 Adjectives Denoting Endearment.

Rae and Mareli (2004) posit that endearment has a clear template in the obituary text where the partner, children, siblings and other relatives of the deceased are mentioned. Families are modified by adjectives which reflect affection and emotion. There is more adjectival description of both the deceased and his or her relationship with the kin. For example in the following extracts from the sampled obituaries,

Loving wife... (extract 1,2)

Loving wife, **cherished** daughter, **beloved** sister... (extract 20)

Doting grand ma ... (extract 1)

Loving mother... (extract 9)

Robert was **loving**, loyal ... (extract 19)

Beloved husband... (extract 4)

These kinship adjectival modifications of *loving*, *doting*, *cherished*, *loyal* and *beloved* ... are an appropriate lexical choice meant to modify the intimacy of the relationships.

The adjective **loving** signifies a feeling of or showing love and being affectionate towards others, (Oxford, 2015). By describing the deceased either as a **loving** wife (extracts 1,2 and 20), **loving** mother...(extract 9) or Robert was **loving**...(extract 19), the obituary writer sought to show how affectionate the deceased persons were to the bereaved. Their use indicates that there was a close tie between the deceased and those left alive, which was essentially broken by the death occurrence.

In describing the deceased as **beloved** in the extract, **beloved sister to** ... (extract 20) and in **beloved husband**... (extract 4), the obituary author seeks to show how much loved the

deceased was by their kin left alive.. More specifically, it shows that there was much love between the deceased husband and the widow and on the other hand, between the deceased sister and her siblings is a fact that cannot be over emphasized. Halliday's (1985) theory in which the ideational metafunction falls exemplifies that language is a means of reflecting on things, such that it represents experiences and how people conceive the world around them. The choice and use of the adjectives loving and beloved aims to fulfill this purpose. Their use reflects on the lives led by the deceased and the close attachment they had with the bereaved. Their deaths are a loss that makes the bereaved miss those emotional attachments of love that they at one time shared with the deceased in life.

By describing the deceased as **...a doting grandma to...** (extract 1), the obituary writer seeks to show that the deceased had great or too much affection, (Oxford, 2015). The implication here is that there an affectionate attachment between the deceased and her grandchildren. This kinship adjective indicates an intimate relationship that existed, something worth emulating. This adjectival use agrees with Thatela's (2001) viewpoint that texts are social practices which represent views and activities of certain social classes or groups. The choice of the adjectives "doting, loving and beloved" displays the strong emotional attachment the bereaved have towards the deceased. In these cases, they eulogize the deceased in a laudatory manner in the sampled obituary texts.

To cherish one implies to love and want to protect somebody or something, to keep a feeling or an idea in one's mind or heart and think of it with pleasure, (Oxford, 2015). The use of the verb **cherished** daughter in the past form means that the deceased daughter was loved, one that the bereaved family would have wanted to protect. This

equally shows that the deceased was valuable. Halliday's (1985) ideational metafunction which propagates that language is a means of reflecting on things is relevant in this case. The implication of cherishing the deceased in this obituary signals the death of a personality that the bereaved family would have wished to protect but because of fate, their wishes could not be granted. As Fowler (1996) observes, when we speak or write about something, the words we choose and the structures of our sentences convey an implicit analysis of the topic and our attitude towards it. In this case, the adjective "cherish" denoting value seeks to show how much the deceased was valued by those left alive. In this case, death is seen as a calamity that disastrously claims the best.

From the sampled obituaries, the kinship section of the texts is usually the most elaborately captured or presented part where the obituary writers focus on the family unit and how the deceased person was regarded within it. Family relations are also described by these adjectives which reflect emotion. The above mentioned adjectival descriptions when used in obituaries provide an opportunity to laud or praise the deceased one last time and indicate how those left a live will miss the exemplified virtues exhibited by the deceased while he was still alive.

4.2 Transitivity Processes and their Informative Purpose

The second section of the data analysis presented herein delves into the second objective of this study, that is, to examine how transitivity processes aid in the informative purpose of the sampled and analyzed obituary texts.

Our analysis of the transitivity processes is based on the representation of death in obituaries through sentence structures that combined various lexical items to

communicate. By borrowing from Kress (1983) and Fowler (1991), among other critical linguists who have used this type of analysis.

Transitivity is Halliday's (1985) term for the kind of processes and participants that occur in clauses. "Process" is a term used to represent the events or states, whether mental or material, where someone, the participant has to do the process. Transitivity is defined as a major component of clause patterns deriving from the ideational function of language, (Abdulaziz, 1996). It is a grammatical process by which we experience the goings on around us, happenings, doings, sensing, meaning, being and becoming. It is a set of options where the speaker or writer encodes his or her experience of the process to the external world.

Transitivity embodies the distinction of processes into two types, those required due to external cause, an agency other than the person or object involved and those that are not. It is a grammar that includes actions, events, states and relations and the structural element typically realizing the processes in the verbal group. Transitivity stresses the power of what might be termed as an agent or actor over another being or entity. Simply put, the system of transitivity examines who or what does what to whom or what. The transitivity world construes the world of experience into manageable sets of processes namely: material, verbalization, mental and relation, (Halliday,1985). These processes are characterized by different semantic potentials. This study is restricted to an examination of the material and mental processes grammatically realized in the predicate and how these reflect on the informative purpose of the obituary text.

A corpus of clauses reflecting the material and mental processes from the obituary texts were analyzed in order to demonstrate how transitivity processes (form) reflects the theme of the sampled obituary texts. From the total purposively sampled 20 obituary texts, a sample of clauses were drawn where the lexical items used to exhibit the informative purpose of obituaries.

4.2.1 Material Processes

The transitivity processes in obituary texts and their informative purpose can also be analyzed basing on the material processes of the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Halliday (1985) posits that material processes entail processes of doings and happenings that involve both animate and inanimate participants. They express the notion that some entity does something, which may be done by another entity. This process type involves actions that may be observed and have consequences. They may also be abstract doings and happenings that may not necessarily be observable. In a clause, the term process refers to the action or event denoted by a verb and represents events or states. This section discusses the material Action intention and the Material action supervision processes.

4.2.1.1 Material Action-Intention Process

Material action intention processes are those in which there is a clear will to do something, thus, the participant actually has the intention of performing a certain action, that the participant is willfully engaged in the action process, (Halliday, 1985). In view of the material-action-intention process, the following clauses were realized from the sampled obituaries

Thereafter *laying* her to rest at ... (extract 1)

She will be *laid* to rest on... (extracts 2,8)

Celebrating a life well lived (extract 5)

All are welcome to *honour* a great ... (extract 10)

Celebrating mum's life... (extract 15)

The Mbithi family *celebrates*... (extract 13)

The verb *laying*, in the present continuous tense, signals the process of burying, politely denoted by this verb *laying* signals a material process according to Halliday's (1985) transitivity tenet of the Systemic Functional Linguistics theory where both the action and the consequences can be observed. The action can further be said to be a material-action intention process because the action of burying the dead is willfully performed by the participants, who are the family members and relatives of the deceased after a church-led funeral service as in the context of this obituary. The use of the verb *laying* implies putting something in a suitable or the correct position for a particular purpose, (Oxford, 2015). In the context of this obituary writing, the verb *laying* implies that the deceased has been put in a correct and comfortable position to facilitate **rest** being perceived as a temporary state of relaxation, a peaceful repose. The ACTOR in this case is the obligatory element of burying the dead, euphemistically denoted as **laying** to mitigate the potential dangers of explicitly mentioning the word. The GOAL is the deceased, Rev. Fridah who represents the entity affected by the process of death that will lead to the act of **laying**. The verb denotes death as less threatening; a very normal occurrence after earthly existence hence diffusing the pain caused by the loss experienced by those left a live. This is meant to console and give hope to the bereaved by denoting death as a

normal occurrence. Wells (1986) observes that the creativity of wording in sentences have a great impact on the perception of the reader on issues discussed in the text. He stresses on how transitivity process types can enrich the meaning in texts and have profound effect on the perception of the reader of the content of the text. The choice of the verb **laying** in the construction helps the obituary reader understand that death is a normal event, less threatening hence diffuse the pain of encountering the loss of a loved one through death.

The same applies for the verb *laid* in; she will be *laid* to rest... (extracts 2,8) The verb *laid* in the past form informs a material process because the action implied by the verb is to bury the dead, in which the participants, in this case, bereaved family willfully carries out after the death of their loved one. The verbs *laying and laid ... to rest* signify the material- action intention process according to the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory. In this case, the participants who are the bereaved family have a clear intention of performing the action of laying the dead to rest and they willingly carry out the process of burying their deceased kin. These verbs are meant to console the bereaved family that the deceased is in repose, in some form of temporary form or state of comfort, which shows the ultimate denial of death and the eventual mitigation of the painful experience. The verbs depict death as a comfortable form of relaxation where the deceased will rise and resume normal body functioning.

According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2015), the verb *celebrating* implies marking a joyous experience, a moment of happiness, signifying pleasant and memorable moments or experiences, usually an important day or event with a social gathering where

people enjoy the experiences of life. The process denoted by the verbs *celebrates* and *celebrating* was captured in the following phrases:

Celebrating a life well lived ... (extract 5)

Celebrating mum's life ... (extract 15) and

The Mbithi family **celebrates**... (extract 13)

The verbs show a material action intention process according to the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) linguistic theory where the family has a clear conviction and willingness to carry out the celebration ceremony of the deceased and are fully engaged in. For the obituary writer to indicate that a funeral ceremony, which is a sad occasion for the bereaved, is a celebration of the life led by the deceased. They find it worthy to celebrate and remember the life well lived by the deceased. For it to be presented as a joyous event denoted by the verbs **celebrating** and **celebrates** is meant to show a different perception about death which in essence is considered a calamity. Considering extract 15, **Celebrating mum's life...**, the ACTOR is the process of **celebration**, an obligatory element expressed by the clause. It is used to inform the readers about the death that should be a joyous experience of reflecting on the successful life of the deceased. The GOAL is the bereaved that are not explicitly mentioned in this obituary, in this case representing the entity or person affected by the process. The use of these verbs serves to inform the reader that death ought to be viewed in the domain of joy but not as a misery. Death is believed to promote the deceased to a destiny of glory that is devoid of suffering. This therefore makes the funeral event worth a celebration of the life of the deceased and not a sorrowful and mourning episode. In the context of these verbs and obituary presentation, celebrating the life of the deceased shows that he or she was an exemplary character. The deceased is

viewed as one who must have made tremendous achievements while alive and one who even in death will be cherished by celebrating. This is because of the indelible marks they must have left in the lives of those they interacted with. In this case, it is clear that religion has played a key role in inspiring a positive view of death hence warranting much celebration.

Closely related to **celebration** is the verb **honour** in the sample, All are welcome to **honour...** (extract 10) signifies a material-Action-intention process. The verb **honour** implies showing great respect for somebody or something (Oxford, 2015). In this case, when one honours another, there is a clear will to do it or perform the action and it can be seen. There is a clear will to do all that it takes to show respect to the deceased as in the case of this obituary. Within the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional theory, for a process to be categorized as a material- action- intention process, emphasis on a clear willingness of the participant in carrying out an action is evident. In honouring the deceased, the bereaved family undertakes it willingly. In the obituary sample;

All are welcome to **honour** this great fallen soldier in the army of God (extract 14)

The implication of this is that the deceased ought to be respected; actions of honour have to be performed. That by attending the funeral service of the deceased and fully participating in the last event of the person's earthly existence by those the deceased interacted with and touched in their lives through his actions, together with the family members and relatives, then that would be an act of outmost honour. The ACTOR in this case is the verb denoting the process of **honour**, reflecting an obligatory action to be

performed. The indefinite pronoun **All** shows the GOAL, which is the person or entity affected by the process of death which leads to **honour**. Their actions of **honour** are in this case positive overtones meant to diffuse the pain of losing a loved one; hence the consolatory purpose of obituaries arises here. Faith is equally brought in through the metaphorical reference of the deceased as a **soldier in the army of God** this being an indicator that the deceased to be honoured has to be rewarded for being steadfast, virtuous and leading an exemplary life. Splinner (1997) posits that judgements of a text can be made in terms of their effects upon the audience and receivers and that texts are vehicles of purposeful interaction. The transition between ideas and expressions in a text can be subjected to conscious training in expressing a given idea. This in essence acts as a sort of liberation from which those left a live will find hope and consolation based on a positive perception of death as a relief. The honour to the deceased is meant to eulogize and in equal measure praise the deceased as an achiever who lived a life worth such commendation and respect.

4.2.1.2 Material Action Supervention Processes

Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics theory singles out that material action supervention processes within its transitivity tenet as those processes that denote actions in which the characters involved are not in control over the process in which they are engaged. These processes are quite different from the material action intention processes because the action denoted by the verb is either done unintentionally or they simply happen to the participant without their control.

The verb **resting** in; we announce the **resting** of...(extract 1) denotes a material supervision process. It is euphemistically used, to refer to the act of dying, that a person is dead. In this case, death is an event that occurs without the approval of the participant, in this case, the deceased. Death happens according to the will and plans of God. The use of the verb **resting** implies that death is a temporary event, repose, (Oxford, 2015), from which one will wake up and resume their normal duties in their lives. In this context of the verb **resting** is the ACTOR, which is the obligatory element of the clause representing a process of death being reported. The is the GOAL is Mama Fridah... referring to the person or entity affected by the process of resting, in this case the reported death.

Similarly, the verb **rest** in the clauses; May his soul **rest** in peace (extract 5) and In God's hands you **rest** (extract 4). These two verbs equally denote the material Action supervision process. This is because the action of resting, euphemistically used to refer to death is an event that occurs without the involvement of the character involved, in this case, the deceased who has no control over death that happens to them. This is in agreement with the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory which posits that things simply happen without the participant's control. That the deceased are comfortably a sleep, a temporary event, done unintentionally to them by supreme powers. In this case, the deceased could not cause their own death but was as a result of powers beyond them. This is meant to portray death as a peaceful relaxation from earthly existence, therefore a desirable condition to be in with the creator who is perceived to have caused the process of rest. Thellen (1972) observes that language is used by people to do things. Language can be manipulated and lexical choices formulated because they are socially useful. To

Thellen (1972), a text communicates only when it leaves a strong impression and creating favorable conditions of attaining a communicative goal. The choice of the verb **resting** portrays death as a form of repose. In this case, the consolation towards the bereaved is achieved in the process of communication.

The verbs **resting** and **rest** in the event of these sampled obituaries serve the informative purpose of consoling the bereaved families. The interpretation of death in the domain of rest presents a peaceful sleep and repose that is full of comfort. This ultimately heightens the denial of the taboo of death as a calamity hence providing relief to the bereaved family that death is less threatening and is a very normal occurrence to the bereaved, metaphorically mapped to rest.

The adjective **fallen** is used in ... a great **fallen** soldier in the army of God (extract 10). To **fall** as a verb derived from the aforementioned adjective connotes the act of dying which is a material action supervention process where the deceased has no control over their death, it simply happens to them. As the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional theory posits that under the material action supervention process, the character involved in the falling, which in this case metaphorically refers to death has no control over the process occurring to them. Death simply occurs to them, they are victims of circumstances. The fight between life and death is predetermined, death always wins. Otherwise, we would all be immortal. We have no control over the manner in which we will lose the fight, either through ailments, accident or sudden death. Within the domain of transitivity, the ACTOR is the concept of falling which depicts death in this case. The goal here is the soldier who represents the person or entity affected by the process of **falling**. The choice of this verb in the context of this obituary is meant to reduce the

impact of reporting the actual event of death using straight forward words which is usually painful to do. To say **fall** in reporting a death occurrence is more polite than directly mentioning the cruel and hurting word **dead**. This helps console the bereaved in such catastrophic and devastating moments and also give them hope to soldier on despite the loss of a loved one through death. By metaphorically referring to the deceased as a **soldier** in the army of the Supreme power gives the obituary text an image of a personality who was steadfast and committed in his service to creator, consequently implying that even in death, the deceased will be at peace with the creator, as an achiever in His army. This choice of the verb, fallen therefore transforms death into a desirable event, giving hope and consolation to the bereaved. That even in death, their deceased is in a better destiny, devoid of pain and suffering as it is the case with the earthly life.

Besides the verb **fall**, there are other verbal groups; **passed, went, called, going** and **ascending** which equally show the supervision processes as in the clauses;

Beatrice **passed**... (extract 2)

Who **went** to be with...(extract 13)

God **called** our mum... (extract 15)

Announce the **going** home of... (extract 18)

Ascending to glory... (extract 6)

These verbs denote material-action supervision processes as the characters involved, thus the deceased persons reported in the obituary texts have no control over the events that happen to them or are engaged in. In the case of: Beatrice **passed**, the ACTOR is depicted by the verb **passed** which is an obligatory element of the clause. The passing here euphemistically refers to the process of dying which the participant has no control

over, it unintentionally happens to them. The GOAL is the noun Beatrice which is the person or entity affected by the process of having **passed**. As the material action supervision process of Halliday's (1985) transitivity tenet posits, characters simply experience what happens to them and have no control over it. This is what happens when a loved one passes on. Death simply comes to them; they encounter it and have no power to stop it. The choice of such a verbal group to substitute the taboo of death is meant to mitigate the potential dangers of the taboo word, which in normal circumstances is considered unpleasant and offensive, full of hurt feelings. Getzel and Thellen (1972) posit that basing on the situational approach of linguistics postulates that language is used by people to "do things". Here, language is manipulated and lexical items selected because they are socially useful in expressing feelings. By using the verbs to indicate movement, the obituary writers seek to show death as a transition to a better destiny hence consoling the bereaved that death is a pleasant experience. Such euphemism provides an avenue of speaking about the unspeakable, about concepts that are considered abominable in the public domain, hence a consolation to the bereaved.

The verbs; **went**, **called**, **going** and **ascending** portray death as a journey, a process of leaving, the final destination being an encounter with the creator, exemplifying the joyous meeting with the creator. The deceased is thus supposed to have moved hence considered to be alive but in a spiritual world. The past form of the verb **go**, in this case **went**, the past form of **call**, in this case **called** and the use of the present continuous forms of **going** and **ascending** denote the processes of dying. Basing on the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) systemic theory, these verbs denote material action supervision processes initiated by forces beyond the control of the deceased. Here, death simply

occurs to the deceased who essentially has no control over it. In extract 15, God **called** our mum..., the ACTOR is the process of **calling**, which is the obligatory element in this clause. It makes things happen by causing sorrow and grief. The GOAL is mum whose death is reported in the obituary text. She is the entity that has no control of the **calling** that happens to her. In these verbs, the journey action is performed by some external agent, someone who helps bring about the process of departure in this case, death making it a material action supervention process. Ultimately, there is the consolation found in the obituary texts that death is a joyful encounter with the supreme power.

The use of the verbs **promotion** and **transition** in the obituary clauses;

Promotion to glory (extract 2)

Transition to eternity (extract 12,14)

The actions signified in the above verbs metaphorically refer to the dying process which happens unintentionally to the deceased, that the deceased has no control of death that raids them. The verbs denote the material action supervention process as they conceptualize a departure thus, the process of movement from this earthly world to the spiritual- heavenly world with the creator who causes it to happen. The choice of the verb **promotion** to glory denotes the movement to a destiny that is eternal, one of great beauty and comfort, (Oxford, 2015). Similarly, the use of the verb **transition** signifies the act of changing from one state to another, in the context of death and obituary writing, the deceased moves from the physical being to a spiritual one. When a loved one gets **promoted** or undergoes **transition**, it implies that they face death as a process. The promotion or transition simply happens to them. They have no control over it. These verbs denote the material action supervention process of the transitivity tenet of Hallidays

(1985) Systemic theory. The deaths communicated in the sampled obituaries through the use of the verbs above show processes that happen to the deceased without their input or control. The verbs ideally connote religious-spiritual attachment and the journey aspect leads the deceased to a more comfortable destiny in death. On the informative purpose of obituaries, the use of such verbal groups helps in negating the devastating impacts of the calamity of death. This is meant to offer consolation to the bereaved family.

The passive construction is also important in transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional theory. It is analyzed because it is the marked option in the voice system (Oloo, 2002). It is derived from the active voice, which is the more basic unmarked option, by means of transformation where the grammatical object becomes the grammatical subject. The passive form is used in instances where one does not know the actor who did or agent who caused or the process presented by the verbal phrase (VP). It is also applicable when one wishes to avoid saying or mentioning who or what it was. As in the sampled clauses;

Was **called**... (extract 5,8)

Was **called** to eternal rest... (extract 20)

The verbal group **called**, preceded by the past form of the auxiliary is (**was**) used to indicate passive constructions in reporting a death occurrence. The concept of death is euphemistically denoted using the verb phrase **being called** and the actor here, who is believed to be the supreme being is not mentioned or brought into focus, thus, the doer or agent is not mentioned. This implies that the passive constructions in reporting a death occurrence in the obituaries denote a material action supervision process of the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory. The **calling** simply happens to the deceased,

it is a happening that they have no control over. This denotation serves the informative purpose of giving hope and consolation to the bereaved family that their deceased kin is in an after-life state beyond natural death.

4.2.2 Mental Processes

Transitivity processes and their informative purpose of obituaries can also be analyzed basing on the mental processes of the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Halliday (1985) posits that mental processes are basically non-actional and they involve sensing, feeling and thinking. They could be behavioral (admiring), perceptive (looking at), cognitive (thinking) or verbal (saying). This type of process is one grammatically in which one participant, the processor or sensor will be invariably human or human like, endowed with a consciousness, the one that senses, feels, thinks or perceives. The participant in the mental process is one referred to pronominally as "he" or "she"

The noun group **battle** denotes a struggle, a fight with or a contest, (Oxford, 2015). In the sampled clause; After a **battle** with cancer... (extract 6,17)

The noun **battle** in this context of death and obituary writing literally denotes a mental process, a perception or feeling by the family of the deceased, those announcing the death of their loved one that the deceased had the resilience or determination to bear with the pain and agony that comes with the terminal ailment as cancer. Ham (2005) posits that seemingly, ordinary words are used in specific contexts to render new meanings. In these cases, context is a very important aspect in the use and interpretation of the noun group "**battle**". As Halliday (1985) observes, within the transitivity tenet, mental processes

involve a feeling and thinking. They are the cognitive and perceptive processes of consciousness through the senses. The noun **battle** in the context of this obituary signifies the perception that the bereaved family had to their loved one. The now deceased in this obituary extract persevered and withstood the pains of the cancerous ailment. The way this determination is reported in the obituary amounts to praising or eulogizing positive and admirable attributes exhibited by the deceased as one who was persevering. In this case, drawing admiration as one that was an exemplary character while alive from those who read the obituary advertisement in the newspapers. In essence, this serves to fulfill one of the prime purposes of obituary texts: to praise and eulogize the life and times of the deceased.

In transitivity, the focus is on the predicates, usually verbs and adjectives that communicate action, process, states and roles performed by the two entities participating in these processes, usually designated by nouns. In the choice of the adjectives to exemplify the character of the deceased as in;

Loving daughter... (extract 8)

Beloved mother... (extract 6)

Dedicated teacher... (extract 9)

Our **beloved**... (extract 8, 16)

They indicate the special endearment attachments the deceased had with the close kin in the family and those they interacted with in their line of duty in life. These adjectives denote positive traits and admirable overtones about the deceased as one who was so **loving** and **dedicated** too in their professional duties as a teacher.

Ongong'a (1990) posits that death arouses many emotions. That death "tears" people from all their loved ones and those they know in this world. Death is viewed as the wicked aspect of life. When one dies, the bereaved review and evaluate the kind of life they led and make conclusions about them. As they refer to them using such adjectivals, they express their deepest of emotions in losing a loved one. As the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory posits, these are linguistically non- action processes that involve a feeling or perception, that the bereaved have a consciousness that perceives the significance of the deceased in their lives hence their denotation as mental processes. The inherent participant roles in this case are the bereaved family, who emotionally react to the death of their loved one. The perceived and reacted to events herein are the positive life attributes of the deceased who are worth admiration and emulation.

These adjectives have a role in the obituary text; to praise and eulogize the deceased as having been an exemplary character, worth admiration and emulation by those left alive. The aforementioned adjectives serve to fulfill the informative purpose of obituaries as offering a glimpse into the commendable life of the deceased, in this manner eulogizing them. Beaugrade (1981) observes that the relation of thoughts evidently affects the arrangement of words and sentences hence relaying meaning. By choosing to use the adjectives denoting endearment or affection, the positive view of the deceased by those left alive is exemplified. This serves to eulogize and praise the deceased as having lived a life worth emulation.

The lexical items; **profound, grief, sorrow, deep, saddened** and **humble** indicate states that are perceived by those who lose their loved ones. In the sampled clauses:

It is with **profound grief...** (extract 4,17)

... and **deep** sense of... (extract 4,11,12)

With **deepest sorrow...** (extract 19)

We are **saddened...** (extract 15)

The choice of these lexical groups informs on the devastating feelings and perceptions that come with the eventual loss of loved ones. Advanced Oxford Dictionary (2015) exemplifies profound as a state or quality of being intense, beyond measure, very great or experienced very strongly. Sorrow on the other hand shows a feeling of great sadness because something very bad has happened, in this case, the death occurrence. Being saddened depicts people in a somber, melancholic or sorrowful mood, meditating on an apparent loss of a loved one through death. A humble state is that of exhibiting humility, being down trodden, showing a modest of oneself or importance, thus, not being proud (Oxford). Bultrick (1998) observes that death is an emotional episode that causes hurt feelings. In this case, death is perceived as an agonizing experience to those left alive and a difficult event to come to terms with. The lexical items denote the perception processes experienced by the bereaved family in an attempt to come to terms with and comprehend the loss of their kin. As Halliday (1985) transitivity tenet of the theory posits, mental processes are internalized and involve perception. The cognitive feelings perceived from these lexical items were meant to mitigate the negative effects of the taboo of death. That though an apparent loss, a disaster and a calamity, the bereaved have no alternative about it but need to accept the death reality in life and soldier on in life, hence a consolation to the bereaved. The creativity of wording in sentences has a great impact on the perception of the reader on issues being discussed in a text. This helps underscore the creation of

reality, (Wells, 1986). By using these lexical items, death is viewed as a loss difficult to bear hence being perceived as one that leads to disastrous consequences. In this case, the use of the lexical items in the transitivity processes helps enrich meaning in the obituary text and the perception of the reader on death as a painful event to the bereaved.

In the case of the verb **cherished** in its past form in the clause; **Cherished** daughter... (extract 18). To cherish signals a feeling of love and protection, (to be loved and be protected), a state of liking someone or having a special attachment, (Oxford, 2015). To cherish a person is a mental process, ideally as a feeling or a perception where the sensor, in this context the parents to the deceased daughter, are endowed with a consciousness that feels and perceives. Thatela's (2001) observation that texts are social practices that represent views and actions of certain social groups and classes applies in the use of the verb "**cherished**" is meant to portray the deceased as a loved one and in losing a loved one, death is portrayed as a disastrous event. The transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional theory describes the act of cherishing as an internalized process. The participant roles here are the sensor, in this case being the family of the deceased that bears the pain and agony of losing a cherished one. The phenomenon is the act of cherishing a deceased family member. The use of the verb **cherished** in its past form amounts to a degree of overstatement that constitutes a laudatory and complimentary device in displaying the social worth of the deceased to the parents and equally modify the intimacy of the relationship between them.

4.3 Summary

This chapter looked at the analysis of data extracted from the sampled obituaries. In the first section, the lexical choices used in the obituaries are addressed together with the meanings that arise from them. In the subsequent section, an analysis of the syntactic forms used in the obituaries and how they aid in their informative purpose was dealt with basing on the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) theory. The transitivity analysis was done using the material and mental processes together with the inherent aspects of interpretation within them. In the next chapter, the research undertakes a summary, conclusion and recommendations of this study basing on the data analysis and findings that emerged from it.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to carry out a lexico- semantic analysis of selected obituaries in the **Daily Nation** newspaper. This was done through the exploration of purposively sampled obituary texts. The study sought to describe how the lexical choices contribute to the meaning making process in obituaries and to explore how transitivity processes aid in the informative purpose of obituaries basing on the tenets of systemic functional linguistics theory by Halliday (1985). This chapter is a development of the previous chapter that focused on data analysis. The chapter summarizes the study as far as the objectives are concerned. The chapter therefore presents an overview of the study as well as the conclusions based on the findings. It goes further to include a suggestion on a gap for possible future academic exploration.

5.2 Summary

The current study was designed to describe how the lexical choices in obituary texts contribute to the meaning making process. From the standpoint of Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the research reflected that the obituary text had the lexical group of a noun that portrayed death as a misfortune, a calamity, and a loss that left the bereaved family bin regret, sorrow and lament. The verbal group was also eminent in the obituary texts under this study. The verbs denoting death as a movement and death as a form of comfort experienced by the deceased. Adverbs of manner, time and reason were also analyzed in this study. The adjectives of emotion, evaluative adjectives depicting the

personality of various deceased persons presented in this study, consolatory adjectives and the adjectives denoting endearment were aspects that emerged from the analyzed data. The lexical items were used in the context of obituary writing to depict death as a desirable event, a source of joy and peace to either the deceased or the bereaved. Consolation of the bereaved was also achieved through the use of the various lexical choices.

The second objective was to explore how transitivity processes aid in the informative purpose of obituary texts in this study. The focusing aspect of the transitivity processes as a tenet within the Functional Linguistics theory was exploited in this objective. The material and mental processes were applied in analyzing the informative purpose of the obituary texts. From the aforementioned two processes, data analyzed showed that the material processes in obituaries were analyzed in two dimensions; the material action intention process, where there is a clear will by the participant to carry out an action and the consequences of their action could easily be observed. Then there is the situation where the participants involved in certain actions taking place in their lives are not in any way involved in those processes, such that the processes simply happen to them without their control, such are referred to as the material action supervision processes. Mental processes also emerged from the analyzed data. These processes are basically non-action and they involve sensing, feeling and thinking in relaying the participant's consciousness. The mental and material processes of the transitivity tenet were used in the obituary texts to console the bereaved, eulogize the deceased and describe or depict death as a desirable event in life.

5.3 Conclusion

In line with the above findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

First, obituaries advertise the passing of friends, loved ones and acquaintances. They recount the life of ordinary people and those of power. They give a glimpse into the shape and cultural interpretation of death. Through the choice and use of various lexical items such as nouns denoting comfort, nouns depicting death as a calamity, verbs depicting death as a form of comfort and a form of movement, adverbs of manner, reason and time or be it the adjectival denoting emotion, evaluation of the character of the deceased while still alive, consolatory adjectives or those denoting endearment, the obituary writer aimed at portraying death as a misfortune or an affliction to both the bereaved and the deceased. They were also meant to console, encourage and give hope to the bereaved family to bear with the sudden loss in the context of death occurrence.

Through the transitivity processes as postulated in the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics theory, the aforementioned tenets helped bring out how death is understood in the domain of material and mental processes. The material processes brought to the fore the interpretation of death in two domains; the material action and the material action supervision processes. In the former process, there is a clear will by the participant to carry out the action and the consequences of the action can be seen. In the latter process, things just happen to the participant without their involvement. In both processes, the aspects of ACTOR and GOAL emerged. Through these processes, it emerged that the obituary texts served the purpose of praising, eulogizing the life and times of the deceased and also consoling the bereaved.

5.4 Recommendations

This study set out to describe how the lexical choices used in obituary texts contribute to the meaning making process in obituaries and explore how the transitivity processes obtained in the sampled and analyzed obituary texts aid in the informative purpose of obituaries.

The study revealed that lexical choice from a set of other options and the aspect of context were of significance in the use and interpretation of given lexical items and their import in the meaning making process. This study recommends that obituary readers ought to analyze the use of various lexical choices made from the perspective of context of use and consideration of the important aspect of choice as they are necessary in the interpretation of meaning.

The transitivity tenet of the Systemic Functional theory helped understand the portrayal of death in the material and mental domains. This study recommends that obituary readers need to also focus on the mental and non-action aspects of admiring, perception and thinking in their effort to understand the messages and how ideas are structured in obituaries and not just viewing an obituary text as mere form of communication of a death occurrence and the upcoming funeral programme.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

The present study is based on a lexico-semantic analysis of selected obituaries from the *Daily Nation* newspaper. It is suggested from the findings that future research work should be done;

It is worth noting that the verbalization and the relational processes of the transitivity tenet of Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics theory were not applied in the data analysis of this study. Consequently, this can form a basis of a scholarly linguistic inquiry of other newspaper articles.

A further study should consider an analysis on the relationship between euphemism and metaphor in the obituary text. This is because the point of divergence between the two processes has rather been fuzzy. The clear point of demarcation between the two has been difficult to decipher as in most cases, lexical items that are viewed as metaphorical equally have euphemistic undertones in them.

REFERENCES

- Abdulaziz.M.H. (1996) Transitivity in Kiswahili, Koln. Rudiger Koppe Verlag.
- Allan, K & Bridge, K (1991) Euphemism and Dyphemism. Language used as a shield and weapon. Oxford University Press. Oxford.
- Ary, D. Jacobs. L and Razarieh, A. (1997) Introduction to Research Education. New York. Holt Winston inc.
- Beaugrade, R. and Dressler, W. (1981) Introduction to text Linguistics. Longman. London.
- Bolinger, D. (1980) Language, The loaded weapon Longman. New York.
- Briggs, A. and Cobley, P. (Eds) (1989) The Media: An Introduction.Longman. London.
- Bultnick, B. (1998) Metaphors We Die By; Conceptualizations of Death in English and their Implications to the Theory of the Metaphor. Antwerpen. Universitet. Antwerpen.
- Crespo, F. (2006) The Language of Death. A Conceptual Metaphors of Death. New York. Doubleday.
- Cruse, D. A. (1986) Lexical Semantics. London. Cambridge University Press.
- Dyer, G (1982) Adverising as Communication. Clays Limited. England
- Eggs, G. (2004) An Introduction to Sytemic Functional Linguistics. London. New York continuum.
- Eid, M. (2002) The World of Obituaries. Wayne State University Publishers. Detroit.
- Elicer, C. F. (2006) The Language of Death. University of Chicago. New Delhi
- Enkivist, K. (1973) Linguistic Stylistics. Edward Arnold. England.
- Fairclough, N. (1998) Language and Power. Longman. London.
- Fan, Z. (2006) The Mechanism of Euphemism. A Cognitive Linguistic Interpretation. US - China Foreign Language
- Fernandez, C. (2006) The Language of Death: Euphemism and conceptual metaphorization in Victorian Obituaries. Sky Journal of Linguistics.
- Fernandez, C. (2009) Metaphorical Conceptualization of Euphemism in Epitaphs. Eustudious. University of Alicante.
- Fernandez, E. C (2007) Linguistic devices of copying with Death in Victorian obituaries. Estudios. University of Alicante.

- Fowler, R. (1991) *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. Routledge. London
- Fowler, R. (1996) *Linguistic Criticism*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
- Fowler, R. (1986) *Language and Control*. Routledge. London.
- Gall, M .D (1996) *Educational Research*. Longman New York. London.
- Getzels, J. W and Thelen, H. A (1972) *A Conceptual Frame work of the study of classroom Group as a social system*. Pengium Publishers. Harmondsworth
- Gupta, C. B and Gupta, V. (2005) *An Introduction to Statistical methods*. Vikas Publishing. London.
- Graziano, A. M & Raulin, M. L (2004) *Research Methods. A process of Inquiry*. 5th Edition: Boston
- Hall. S (1992) *The Question of Cultural Identity*. Vikas Publishing. London.
- Halliday, M. A.K (1978) *Language and Social semiotics*. Edward Arnold. London.
- Halliday, M. A.K (1985) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Edward Arnold. London.
- Ham, K. (2005) *The Linguistic Euphemisms. A Diachronic Study of Euphemism Formation*. *Journal of Language and Linguistics* (P2) House. New Delhi
[http:// www. Nationaudio.com|kenyapolitics|informationmedia.hotmail](http://www.Nationaudio.com|kenyapolitics|informationmedia.hotmail). Retrieved on 5th May 2017.
- Hudson, R. (1984) *Invitation to Linguistics*. Backwell Publishres. Oxford.
- Jarongo, F.C.(2008) *A Textual Analysis of the Kenyan constitution Review campaign by two Kenyan newspapers*. Masters Thesis. Maseno University.
- Johnson, D.M (1992) *Approaches to Research in second language learning*. Longman. New York.
- Kennedy, G.(1998) *An Introduction to Corpus Linguistics*. London. Routledge.
- Knutson, G. S (1981) *Content Analysis of Obituaries*. University of Chicago. New York.
- Kothari, C. R. (2008) *Quantitative Techniques*. Vikas Publishing House. PVT Ltd. London.
- Kress, G. R (1983) *Linguistic Processes and the Mediation of Reality*. *The Politics*
- Lakoff,G.(1993) *The Contemporary Theory of the Metaphor*. Andrew Ortony(ed) *CambridgLanguage and control*. Routledge. London
- Leech, G and Short, M (1981) *Style in Fiction. A Linguistic Introduction of English Functional Grammar*. Edward Arnold. London.

- Lemke, J.L (1992) *Interpersonal meaning in discourse: Value orientations and Advances in systemic linguistics*. Printer Publishers. London Living. North Western University. Texas
- Lyons, J. (1985) *Language and Semantics. An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press. New York. London.
- Marczyk, G et al (2005) *Essentials of Research Design and Methodology*. New Jersey. John Willey and sons Inc.
- Malinowski, K (1991) *The Problem of Meaning in primitive Languages* in Ogden Charles. Vikas Publishing House. London.
- Mills, S. (1995) *Femism Stylistics*. London. Routledge.
- Milroy, L. (1997) *Observing and Analyzing Natural Language. "A critical Account of Modernity and its Future*. Cambridge. Oxford. Open University Press.
- Mugenda, O.M & Mugenda, A.G (1999) *Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. ACTS press. Nairobi.
- Mbiti, S.J (1975) *An Introduction to African Religion*. Heinemann Education Publishers. New Hampshire. USA.
- Mugambi, J & Kirima, N. (1982). *The African Religious Heritage*. Oxford University Press. Nairobi
- Nyakoe, G.D. (2011) *A Semantic Analysis of Ekegusii Euphemisms*. Masters Thesis. Maseno University.
- Oloo, P.A. (2002) *Language and Gender. Transitivity choice analysis of Margaret Ogola's; The River and The source*. Masters Thesis. Maseno University.
- Ogula, P.A. (2005). *Research Methods*. Nairobi –Kenya. CUEA publications.
- Ononkerperne, I. S. (2004) *A Semiotic study of Nigerian Obituaries*. A PhD Thesis. Nigeria.
- Ongong'a, J.J. (1990) *A Comparative Study of Religion*. Nairobi University Press. Nairobi.
- Advanced Oxford Learners Dictionary (2015). Longman. London.
- Postlethwaite, T.N. (2005). *Educational Research*. <http://ww.unesco.org>. May 2017
- Rae, A. M and Giana, D. M. (2004) *Obituaries and the discursive construction of Death and Living in Victorian Obituaries*. Austin. Texas.
- Ramenyi, D. (2003) *Doing Reserch in Business management*. United Kingdom. Sage publications,

- Rawsom, H.(1995) Dictionary of Euphemism and other double talk. New York. Random Hse.
- Reach, D. (1998) The Language of the Newspapers. Routledge. London Richard Ivor. The Meanings of Meaning. London. Oxford University Press.
- Sebastian,L. (2002) Understanding Semantics. London. Arnold.
- Sellinger,K.& Shohamy,L. (1989) Second Language acquisition Research. London. Oxford Univerity Press.
- Sexton, J. (1997). The Semantics of Death and Dying. Metaphor and Mortality. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.
- Silverman, D. (2000) Doing Qualitative Research. A Practical Handbook. Thousand Oaks. London. Arnold.
- Simpson, P. (1993) Language, Ideology and Point of view. Routledge. London.
- The New Encyclopedia Britannica (1991) Vol. 23 Macropaedia. Chicago. (pp 540-547)
- Thetela, P (2001) Critique Discourses and Ideology in Newspaper Reports. Discourse and society.
- Trew, T (1997) What Newspapers say: “Linguistic Variation and Ideological difference”
- Ullman, S.(1962) Semantics. Oxford. Backwell.
- Van Dijk (1991) News in Discourse. Erlbaum. Hillsdate. New Jersey.
- Wales, K. (2001) A Dictionary of Stylistics. 2nd Ed. Longman. London.
- Warren, B (1992) What Euphemisms tell us about the Interpretation of words. Studia Linguistics.
- Waudhaugh,R.(1986) An Introduction to Sociolinguistics. NewYork. Basil Backwell.
- Webster, N (1973) Websters Third International Dictionary. Chicago. Rand McNally &Co.
- Wells, S. (1986) The Cambridge companion of Shakespere studies. New York. Cambridge University Press.
- Wheeler,M.(1994) Heaven, Hell and the Victorian Obituaries. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.
- Wheller, M (1994) Heaven, Hell and the Victorians. Cambridge University Press. Oxford.
- Williams, R. (1997) Marxism and Literature. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Zhang, z. (2008) Comparative analysis of English and Chinese euphemisms from the perspective of communication function. A Dissertation of foreign languages and cultures. Panzihua University.

APPENDIX III: ETHICS REVIEW RESEARCH PERMIT



MASENO UNIVERSITY ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tel: +254 057 351 622 Ext: 3050
Fax: +254 057 351 221

Private Bag – 40105, Maseno, Kenya
Email: muerc-secretariate@maseno.ac.ke

FROM: Secretary - MUERC

DATE: 6th July, 2017

TO: Amos Maina Oyoko
PG/MA/0101/2011
Department of Linguistics
School of Arts and Social Sciences
Maseno University
P. O. Box, Private Bag, Maseno, Kenya

REF: MSU/DRPI/MUERC/00385/17

**RE: A Lexico-Semantic Analysis of selected Obituaries in the Daily Nation Newspaper.
Proposal Reference Number: MSU/DRPC/MUERC/00385/17**

This is to inform you that the Maseno University Ethics Review Committee (MUERC) determined that the ethics issues raised at the initial review were adequately addressed in the revised proposal. Consequently, the study is granted approval for implementation effective this 6th day of July, 2017 for a period of one (1) year.

Please note that authorization to conduct this study will automatically expire on 5th July, 2018. If you plan to continue with the study beyond this date, please submit an application for continuation approval to the MUERC Secretariat by 6th June, 2018.

Approval for continuation of the study will be subject to successful submission of an annual progress report that is to reach the MUERC Secretariat by 6th June, 2018.

Please note that any unanticipated problems resulting from the conduct of this study must be reported to MUERC. You are required to submit any proposed changes to this study to MUERC for review and approval prior to initiation. Please advise MUERC when the study is completed or discontinued.

Thank you.



Dr. Bonuke Anyona,
Secretary,
Maseno University Ethics Review Committee

Cc: Chairman,
Maseno University Ethics Review Committee.

MASENO UNIVERSITY IS ISO 9001:2008 CERTIFIED



Death and Funeral Announcement

... (formerly of B.A.T) was called to Gods' glorious presence on the 4th of February 2016 at Metropolitan Hospital in Nairobi.

Funeral arrangements are ongoing at his home in BuruBuru Phase 5 and at BenEve Restaurant Opposite GPO Kenyatta Avenue from 6pm in Nairobi. There will be a fundraising on Thursday in the same venue. The cortege will leave Nairobi, Umash Mortuary, on 13th of February 2016 at 6.30am, to be laid to rest at his farm in Kinyambu, Kibwezi West Constituency in Makueni County.

May his soul rest in peace.

EXTRACT 3

Death and Funeral Announcement

Brian Mwendwa Mbithi

It is with profound grief and a deep sense of loss that we announce the demise of Brian Mwendwa Mbithi of The Kenya Electricity Transmission Company Limited (KETRACO). He passed on through a road accident along Mombasa Road on 7th February, 2016.

Family and friends are meeting daily at Nyayo Stadium cafeteria from 5.00pm and at their home ground in Mbembani. The cottage leaves Montezuma

EXTRACT 4

Celebrating a Life Well Lived

The Late [redacted] Fahey was called to Eternal Rest on Monday, February 1, 2016. He worked for General Motors Kenya for many years.

Husband of Maria Goretti Fahey. Father of Jane, Alison and Melanie of Naisula School.

His Memorial Mass will be held at St. Catherine of Siena, Catholic Church, Kitisuru, on Saturday, February 13th at 11.00a.m.

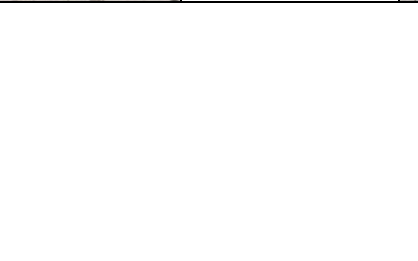
May his soul rest in Eternal Peace
Always in our thoughts,
forever in our hearts

EXTRACT 5

Celebration of Well Life Lived

It is with humble acceptance of God's will that we announce the ascending into Glory of our beloved mother [redacted] Jege, wife of the Late Gabriel Ondiege of Makunda Village, Budalingi, Busia County, on 7th February, 2016 after battle with cancer.

Loving mother of [redacted]



The Cortege leaves Segu Hospital Mortuary on Friday 19th February for Church service at Nangina Catholic Church for Holy Mass, thereafter to her home at Nangina village for overnight stay. She will be laid to rest on Saturday 20th February, 2016 after funeral services at her home starting at 10.00am.

Revelations: 14-13

"Blessed are the Dead who die in the Lord They will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them"

EXTRACT 6

Celebrating of Life Well Lived

It is with deep sorrow and humble acceptance of God's will that we announce the promotion to glory of Dr. [redacted] who peacefully passed on 8/02/2016 after a short illness. Beloved son of [redacted]

[redacted]

others.

Friends and relatives are meeting daily from 5.00pm at his residence in Elgon --View. Fund-raising to be held on Tuesday 16/02/2016 at Highlands Inn Hotel Eldoret at 5pm. The cortege leaves MTRH Mortuary on Wednesday 17/2/2016 for overnight stay at his residence in Elgon View. Departs for Chavakali on 18/2/2016 for burial on Saturday 20/2/2016.

2nd Tim 4;7 I have fought the good fight I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

EXTRACT 7

Death & Funeral Announcement

On Feb 5th 2016, our beloved [redacted] was called to her eternal rest. Cherished daughter of [redacted]

[redacted]

Family and friends are meeting daily at their residence in Lokichar. Harambee will be held on Tuesday 16th, 2016 at Professional Center along Parliament Road.

The cortege leaves Nairobi Women mortuary on Friday 19th Feb 2016 at 3.30 pm and laid to rest at 2pm Sat 20th Feb 2016 in Lokichar.

"The lord gave you to us and he has taken you to eternal home, rest in peace."

EXTRACT 8

Kagumo High School

Death and Funeral Announcement

It is with humble acceptance of God's will that we announce the ascending into Glory of on 9th February, 2016. Until her death she was a dedicated teacher of Kagumo High School in Nyeri County.

Daughter of the late

Friends and relatives are meeting daily for funeral arrangements from 5.30 p.m. at Kinangop Hotel in Nairobi along Tom Mboya Street, Gishurai 45 at her brother's residence (Baba Alex) near DACHA House and at her parent's home in Karatina near Ngorano Health Centre. The cortege leaves Nyeri Funeral Home next to Outspan Hospital on Thursday, 18th February, 2016 at 9.30 a.m. Burial will be held at her father's place near Ngorano Health Centre, in Nyeri County.

**And though after my skin worms destroy this body,
yet in my flesh shall I see God (Job 19: 26).**

EXTRACT 9

Death and Funeral Announcement

It is with humble acceptance of God's will that we announce the promotion to glory of Senior pastor at Redeemed Gospel Church Uhuru estate, Nairobi.

The funeral procession leaves Nairobi West Funeral Home on Friday 19/02/2016 at 8.00 A.M. The funeral will be held at Kivai village in Kivani Location, Kaiti Division, Makeni County at 12.00 noon same day.

Funeral arrangements are going on daily from 6.00 PM at Redeemed Gospel Church Uhuru estate, Kiambio stage. There will be a Requiem Service on Wednesday 17/02/2016 from 2.00 PM and thereafter, there will be a Fundraising to off-set the Hospital Bill and the funeral expenses Which stand at 1.8 Million. All pastors, Friends, relatives and Christians are welcome to honor this great fallen soldier in the army of the Lord.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith. (2 Tim 4:7)

EXTRACT 10

Celebration of Life

It is with a deep sense of loss and humble acceptance of God's will that we announce the death of [redacted] on the 12th of February 2016 while undergoing treatment at the Avenue Nursing Home Kisumu. (formally P.R.O Kenya Railways). Beloved husband of [redacted]

Burial arrangements will be announced later.
Donations via Mpesa: Paybill No.326346, Acc. No: Your Name or Phone Number.
You have fought a good fight, you have finished the race, you have kept the faith 2nd Timothy 4:7. In God's hands you rest in our hearts you live forever
"He who believes in me though he may die shall live Rest in Peace

EXTRACT 11

Transition to Eternity

It is with deep sorrow and humble acceptance that we announce the passing on to glory of [redacted] which occurred on the 4th of February 2016 through brutal murder.

Friends and relatives are meeting daily at Norwich Union House (Nairobi), Old T-Tot Hotel (Machakos) and her parents' home in Jerusalem estate for funeral arrangements. There will be a fundraiser on Thursday 18th Feb at Norwich Union House at 6:00 pm. The cortege leaves Montenzuma Funeral Home - Machakos on 20th February for burial at her final resting place, Mukuyuni, Makeni County.

Contributions can also be made through Lipa na Mpesa pay bill number 949077, leave account number blank, enter amount and pin then send.

The Lord rest her soul in eternal peace.
The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised. Job 1: 21

EXTRACT 12

Celebration of a life well lived

The Mbiti family celebrates the life of Sarah [redacted] who went to be with the Lord on Saturday 13th February, 2016. Sarah was born around the year 1911 at Mavindini village, Kiketa Location (now wamunyu location). Daughter of the late Kyove Tama and the late Nguna Kyove. Wife to the late Mbiti Ikandi and co-wife to the late Mary Mbuu and the late Esther Mutinda.

Blessed with many children namely: [redacted]

[redacted]

grand mom of a good multitude.

Meetings are being held at Wendano hotel in Wamunyu from 6:30pm and at GR restaurant 1st Floor at Postbank house opposite City market in Nairobi from 5:30pm. Funeral service is will take place at Makalu village, Yathui Location, Machakos County on Saturday 20th February, 2016 at 12.30pm.

An M-changa account has been set up for contributions. The paybill no. is 891300, Account no. 6045 . There are no standing charges.

Timothy 4:7; I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

EXTRACT 13

Promotion to Glory

[redacted]

Security

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the untimely death of [redacted] Gakuu following an operation at Nairobi Hospital. Son of the late Nahashon Gakuu and the late Martha Wairimu of Ngandu Village Karatina, Nyeri County.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Friends and relatives are meeting at NPC Karen, NPC Valley Road, Country house Inn Karen and at home in Ngandu from today Friday 19th February 2016 from 5:30pm. There will be an urgent fund raising on Tuesday 23rd February 2016, at NPC Valley Road at 5.00p.m.

Funeral arrangements will be announced later.

EXTRACT 14

Celebrating Mum's Life

God called on [redacted] Chebunye Rd
to His Glorious presence on 14th February, 2016.
We are saddened, but we are filled by His Grace and
accept His will.

Loving wife of J [redacted]
daughter of the late [redacted]

C
L
I
F
F
A
N
C
I
S

Kiptoo, Kipchumba, Chebet and Chege

Family and friends are meeting daily for prayers and
funeral arrangements at her residence in Mzalendo, Olenguruone, Kuresoi South. The cortege
leaves St. Joseph Mortuary on Friday 19th February, 2016 at 2pm for Olenguruone Catholic
Church and thereafter for an overnight stay at home, Mzalendo. Funeral mass and interment
will be on Saturday 20th February, 2016 from 10am.

We celebrate your life mum,
your laughter and hard work will forever live in our hearts.

EXTRACT 15

Gone Too Soon

[redacted]

It is with deep sorrow and humble acceptance of God's will that we announce
the sudden passing on to heavenly glory of our beloved [redacted]
[redacted] through a tragic road accident.

[redacted]

Family, relatives and friends are meeting daily at their Kasoiyo Home, All Saints
Cathedral Nairobi and Bontana Hotel Nakuru for funeral arrangements.

Burial will take place on Tuesday, 23rd February 2016 at his home in Kasoiyo,
Kabarnet, Baringo County.

EXTRACT 16

Celebration of a Life Well Lived

It is with profound grief but humble acceptance of God's will that we announce the passing on to Heavenly glory of
 Mama [redacted] after a long battle with cancer.

Family, relatives and friends will meet on Tuesday 23rd February 2016 at United Kenya Club at 6.00pm for a fundraising and funeral arrangements.

A service will be held on Wednesday 24th February 2016 at Friends International Centre-Ngong Road at 2.00pm. Burial will take place on Saturday 27th February 2016 at 10.00am at Kamimei village, Nandi South, Nandi County.

Psalms 18:30 "As for God, his way is completely good: The word of the LORD is tested; he is a breastplate for all those who put their faith in him."

EXTRACT 17

58 | Transition

Celebration of a Life Well Lived

It is with humble acceptance of God's will that we announce the going home of [redacted] on 20 February 2016, formerly a Secretary at the Sub-County office Muthambi, County Government of Tharaka Nithi. Loving daughter of the late [redacted]

Friends and relatives are meeting daily at her parents home in Ntunguri. The cortege leaves St. Theresa Mission Hospital, Kiirua, Meru on Friday 26 February 2016 at 9.00am for funeral and prayer service at her parents home in Kanoo Village, Ntunguri Sub-location, Mara District, Tharaka Nithi County at 12.00 noon. For more information, kindly contact 0722792350 or 0722793825

EXTRACT 18

