

Stylistic and Linguistic Analysis of a Literary Text Using Systemic Functional Grammar¹⁾

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本稿はM.A.K.Hallidayの機能主義文法における過程構成(transitivity)のモデルを小説分析に応用したものである。過程構成は言語のメタ機能のひとつである観念構成的機能(the ideational function)を実現するための言語手段であり、物質過程、関係過程、心理過程、発言過程、行動過程、存在過程と各過程における参与要素から成る。これらをロマンス小説の登場人物描写に応用し、各人物の特質、行動様式、人物間の力構造、さらにそれらを通して筆者の描こうとする世界観を意味文法および語彙分析の立場から明らかにしようと試みた。このような分析法は、小説や文学テキストを始めとして、それ以外のテキスト(新聞・広告分析など)にも応用可能であることを提示し、これまで別々の分野とされてきた意味文法と小説分析との接点を求めるものである。

Key words: functional grammar; transitivity; stylistics; narrative; gender

1. Introduction

This article explores the relationship between linguistic structures and socially constructed meaning in a narrative text. By employing Halliday's transitivity framework, the article attempts

to reveal the ideology and power relations that underpin a literary text from a semantico-grammatical point of view. This study seeks common ground where systemic grammar and narrative, which have long been considered separate disciplines, can meet.

1.1 Narrative as a linguistically constructed world

We humans beings often put our experiences and thoughts into stories. Narrative refers to storytelling, both written and spoken, including oral narrative. A narrative constructs a world using various linguistic resources. A narrative is a microcosm of how people act, feel, and think, and what they value as an individual or as a member of a community or institution. There are various methods for, and theories of, narrative analysis and its presentation. One of the most widely adopted is that of Labov and Waletzky (1967), who presented structural stages for narrative analysis that have been widely accepted. The stages are : 1. Abstract, 2. Orientation, 3. Complicating Action, 4. Evaluation, 5. Results / Resolution, 5. Coda (Labov and Waletzky 1967).²⁾ It is important to note the ways in which the structural stages of a narrative can be ordered, controlled, and even manipulated in order to encode ideological assumptions, and also to get across some ideas. This is especially true of the evaluation stage (which is a sort of representation) of narrative, where many linguistic devices can be used. In this way, “the ability to narrate has to be seen as a creative artifact and therefore not necessarily a

representation...of actual events” (Davies 2005: 99).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), a politicized school of discourse analysis, attempts to uncover the underlying ideology or worldview of the text under consideration. For example, Fairclough (1989, 1995), Fowler (1977, 1986), and Fowler, Hodge, Kress, and Trew (1979) adopt various linguistic analyses, including transitivity and modality, to uncover ideas and evaluation in newspapers, advertisements, narratives, and other texts and to reveal that they are not objective retellings of what actually happened or occurring events, but socially and ideologically situated retellings. By extension, Bell (2000) makes significant points about the ways that institutional structure influences discourse type. As such, narrative research should be interdisciplinary, blurring and crossing boundaries of linguistic and social studies and literary pursuit.

One of the regrettable points about the critical discourse analysis tradition is that they seem to have given the impression that their approach has been focused on foregrounding examples of linguistic and stylistic deviance. An important point this article hopes to make is that linguistic, stylistic, or interdisciplinary analysis of a text should not always be oriented towards uncovering examples of deviant linguistic patterns; it can be used beneficially for clarifying characteristics and meanings in any text — whether conventional or nonconventional features — including literary and nonliterary ones.

1. 2. Pioneering linguistic and stylistic analyses of literary texts

This section introduces some of the previous literature that illustrates how power relations and conventional or nonconventional attitudes towards life are reflected in language patterns.

As a groundbreaking example of nonstandard usage of language expressing a worldview, Halliday's article (1971) "Linguistic function and literary style: An inquiry into the language of William Golding's *The Inheritors*" is an influential one. In this work Halliday discusses the patterns of transitivity, including what processes, participants, and circumstances (these terms are explained in section 2. 1.) occur in the clause or sentence. He proceeds to illustrate how they are used by Golding to imply "cognitive limitation," a decreased sense of causation and an incomplete recognition of how human beings can control the world, as experienced by the main character, Lok, a Neanderthal man whose world is being taken control of by the people of a more "advanced" world. Also, there is Kennedy's (1982) analysis of a scene from Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*. Kennedy analyzes the verbs used, examining why the sequential murder scene in the story stylistically gives the impression of distance and detachment, as if the murderer were not responsible for what she was doing. In the same article Kennedy also analyzes Joyce's "Two Gallants" from the collection *Dubliners*, clarifying the power relationship between the two men using some elements of

systemic functional grammar. There is Burton's (1982) feminist stylistic analysis of a sequence from Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*. Burton reveals an unequal power relationship between the medical staff (the doctor and a nurse) and a female patient, and thus demonstrates that the helpless patient could not influence anything in regard to communication and other things going on in the hospital, while the doctor and the nurse actively influenced what was happening. Similar to this is Kies's (1992) "The uses of passivity: Suppressing agency in *Nineteen eighty-four*," which analyzes the main linguistic features of George Orwell's masterpiece. Kies's analysis reveals how the actions and thoughts of a man in a totalitarian state are rendered passive and helpless by the power of the state. Robson and Stockwell (2005) introduce lexical and discoursal patterns and other linguistic devices employed in writings for women, including cooking recipes.

2. Transitivity theory

Halliday's transitivity theory provides a useful linguistic framework for uncovering the main linguistic features of a certain literary discourse. The analysis of transitivity and its application to literary discourse in this article basically follows Halliday's theoretical framework. This section introduces the theory, and section 4 has to do with the application of transitivity to its use in literary discourse.

2. 1. Transitivity as an ideational function of language³⁾

In Halliday's terms, transitivity is a part of the ideational function of the clause.⁴⁾ The ideational function of the clause is concerned with the "transmission of ideas." Its function is that of "representing 'processes' or 'experiences': actions, events, processes of consciousness and relations" (1985 : 53). The term "process" is used in an...extended sense, "to cover all phenomena...and anything that can be expressed by a verb: event, whether physical or not, state, or relation" (Halliday 1976 : 159). Halliday further notes that the "processes" expressed through language are the product of our conception of the world or point of view. He notes:

Our most powerful conception of reality is that it consists of "goings-on" : of doing, happening, feeling, being. These goings-on are sorted out in the semantic system of the language, and expressed through the grammar of the clause... [T]he clause evolved simultaneously in another grammatical function expressing the reflective, experiential aspect of meaning. This...is the system of TRANSITIVITY. Transitivity specifies the different types of process that are recognized in the language, and the structures by which they are expressed (Halliday 1985: 101).

The semantic processes expressed by clauses have potentially three components, as follows:

- (1) the process itself, which will be expressed by the verb phrase in a clause.
- (2) the participants in the clause, which refer to the roles of entities that are directly involved in the process : the one that does, behaves or says, together with the passive one that is done to, said to, etc. The participants are not necessarily humans or even animate; the term “participant entities” would be more accurate (Halliday 1976 : 160). The participant entities are normally realized by noun phrases in the clause.
- (3) the circumstances associated with the process, which are typically expressed by adverbial and prepositional phrases. (Halliday 1985: 101–102)

Transitivity is an important semantic concept in the analysis of representation of reality, in that transitivity enables us to analyze and represent the same event and situation in different ways. The transitivity patterns can also indicate the certain mind-set or worldview “framed by the authorial ideology” (Fowler 1986: 138) in literary texts.

2. 2. The relevance of the transitivity framework to the analysis of literary discourse

Transitivity has been a popular part of the analytic tool in the school of critical discourse analysis. The transitivity model

provides a means of discovering how certain linguistic structures of a text encode the particular worldview or ideological stance of a reader/speaker. As Fowler notes:

Linguistic codes do not reflect reality neutrally; they interpret, organize, and classify the subjects of discourse. They embody theories of how the world is arranged: world-views or ideologies (1986: 27).

Thus, selection from the transitivity system can suggest different mind-sets or worldviews, including a traditional or an unusual mind-set reflected in language.

The first principle of a transitivity analysis is to uncover the principle “who or what does what to whom or what?” Put simply, transitivity refers to the relationship between the action of an **Actor** and its effect upon the **Goal** (the terms Actor and Goal are explained in section 2. 3. 1. 1).⁵⁾ However, unlike traditional grammar, and following Halliday’s tradition, the term transitivity is used here more as a semantic concept than simply as a syntactic description. In traditional grammar, transitivity is purely a syntactic description; it is based on whether a verb takes an Object or not. The former is called a transitive verb while the latter is an intransitive verb.⁶⁾ Nevertheless, in any analysis of transitivity based on the semantic description rather than a purely syntactic one, as Halliday notes, one of the important

questions is whether there is an implication of an animate individual (Actor/Agent) intentionally doing the action to another entity (Goal).

Transitivity patterns are also subject to social and cultural factors as well as any individual mind-set. Different social structures and value systems require different patterns of transitivity. In order to get a picture of what is happening from the viewpoint of one's subjective reality involved in the story, the following process is helpful.

- (1) Isolate the process *per se*, and determine which participant (who or what) is doing each process;
- (2) Determine what *sorts* of process they are, and which participant is engaged in which type of process;
- (3) Determine who or what is *affected* or seems to be *affected* by each of these processes.

(cf. Burton 1982: 202)

I shall now systematize the transitivity model to make it relevant to my analysis. I first introduce major process types and their subclassifications, then the participant roles that are directly involved in the processes.

2. 3. Transitivity model

2. 3. 1. Types of processes

Transitivity processes can be classified into material, relational, mental, verbal, behavioral, and existential processes, according to whether they represent processes of doing, being, sensing, saying, behaving, or existing, respectively. The following sections account for these major processes realized in the transitivity system, and the participant roles that are involved in the processes.

2. 3. 1. 1. Material processes

Material processes are processes of doing in the physical world. Material processes have two inherent participants involved in them. The first of these is the **Actor**, which is an obligatory element and expresses the doer of the process. The second is the **Goal**, which is an optional element and expresses the person or entity (whether animate or inanimate) affected by the process. In addition to these two inherent participant roles, there is an extra element called **Circumstance**, which provides additional information on the “when, where, how, and why” of the process. The Circumstantial meaning is realized, not in nominal phrases,⁷⁾ but as either adverbial phrases or prepositional phrases, and so is subsidiary in status to the process. Circumstance expresses supplementary information, such as place, time, extent, matter, manner, duration, condition, means, etc.

The following examples illustrate these constructions:

- (1) John kicked the ball.
 Actor Process: material Goal
- (2) John hit the man very hard.
 Actor Process: material Goal Circumstance: Manner
- (3) The boat sailed in the bay.
 Actor Process: material Circumstance: Place

Of course, it is possible to reverse Actor + Goal in a passive form, placing a Goal at an initial position and Actor at the end of the sentence, such as:

- (2)' The man was hit by John.
 Goal Process: material Actor

Material processes can be further subclassified according to whether the process is performed intentionally or spontaneously and whether by an animate Actor or inanimate Actor (for details see, for example, Berry 1977a, Halliday 1976).⁸⁾

Ergative analysis

The standard analysis of transitivity may well be expanded to involve the supplementary analysis of ergative analysis. Halliday holds that “all transitivity systems, in all languages, are some

blend of these two semantic models of processes, the transitive and ergative” (1994: 167). In the same way, Davidse (1992: 107) says that the grammar of material processes is “Janus-headed,” that is, it is regulated by the two distinct systems of transitivity and ergativity.

In the transitivity model, the central participant roles are Actor and Goal, and the interest is on whether or not the process is directed by the Actor towards a Goal, as in “John kicked the ball.” According to this, in the transitivity model, “the window” in the sentence “The window broke” is labeled as an Actor although semantically it is an affected participant or an enforced actor, which may be a little problematic labeling. Ergative interpretation provides a solution on this point.

While the transitivity system realizes a process and extension model (Halliday 1994: 162–3) and is Actor-centered, the ergative system is Goal-centered (cf. Davidse 1992: 113, 115; Fawcett 1980: 140). Goal is called **Medium** in ergative analysis. The central participant roles of the ergative system are **Medium** and **Agent** or **Causer**. A Medium is “the entity through which the process comes into existence,” as its name suggests (Halliday 1994: 163). Halliday defines the concept of Medium in the following terms:

... [T]he Medium is the nodal participant throughout the system. It is not the doer, nor the causer, but the one that is critically involved, in some way or other according to the particular nature of the process. (Halliday 1994: 165)

The Process and the Medium together form the nucleus of an English clause. (Halliday 1994: 164)

Davidse (1992: 132) slightly expands the definition of Medium to “the generalized single participant which has neither true agency nor real affectedness associated with it.” As such, Medium is equivalent to the Actor in an intransitive (i. e., non-Goal-directed) sentence and the Goal in a transitive sentence. The Agent is equivalent to the Actor in Goal-directed material processes. Ergative analysis is a beneficial supplement, providing an extra stratum or rank to the standard interpretation of transitivity analysis that will be adequate for most purposes. The following is a double analysis of example sentences to illustrate how the (standard) transitive and the ergative interpretations interrelate with each other.

(4)	The recruits	marched.
Transitive analysis:	Actor	Process: material
Ergative analysis:	Medium	Process: material

“The recruits marched” because they were made to do so by the general, thus “the recruits” will be an enforced Actor or Medium but not an Agent. In transitive analysis another participant function, Initiator must be introduced to account for the executive role. Thus, the participant roles of each analysis will be as follows.

- (5) The general marched the recruits.
 Transitive analysis: Initiator Process: material Actor
 Ergative analysis: Agent Process: material Medium

Here is another example, “I broke the window,” and “The window broke,” which is analyzed as follows in each interpretation.

- (6) I broke the window.
 Standard analysis: Actor Process: material Goal
 Ergative analysis: Agent Process: material Medium

- (7) The window broke.
 Standard analysis: Actor Process: material
 Ergative analysis: Medium Process: material

2. 3. 1. 2. Relational processes: from Action to Being

Relational processes are concerned with the process of being in the world of abstract relations. Normally, an abstract relationship that exists between two participants associated with the process is considered, but unlike the case of material process, a participant does not affect the other participant in a physical sense. Examples are “John is talented,” and “John is the leader.”

The types of relational process are quite complex and controversial (for example, see Eggins 1994: 255). For the present

analysis, it is sufficient to identify the following two principal process types: the attributive mode in intensive processes and the identifying mode in intensive processes. Intensive, being one of the three main relational types (i. e., Intensive, Circumstantial, and Possessive), expresses an “x is y” relationship, while Circumstantial denotes an “x is at y” relationship, and Possessive, an “x has y” relationship. Each of the three types can appear in two distinct modes:

Attributive: “y is an attribute of x”

Identifying: “y is the identity of x”

Since only the attributive mode and the identifying mode in intensive processes are of particular relevance to the present study, a detailed explanation of the other types (Circumstantial and Possessive) is unnecessary here.

2. 3. 1. 2. 1. Intensive attributive processes

The intensive attributive process basically suggests the relationship of “x carries the attribute y,” where a quality, classification, or adjective (**Attribute**) is assigned to a participant (**Carrier**). The relationship between the Attribute and the Carrier is commonly expressed by the verb *be*. The Carrier is always realized by a noun or a nominal phrase, and the Attribute by an adjective or a nominal phrase, for example:

(8) John is talented.
 Carrier Process: relational Attribute

(9) John is a talented boy.
 Carrier Process: relational Attribute

Although the most typical intensive verb is *be* in English, various intensive attributive synonyms are possible, as the following examples illustrate:

She kept quiet. They seemed terrified.

He looked puzzled. He became ill.

She turned angry. It seemed perfect.

The copular verbs in parenthetical phrases can be omitted, such as in the text shown in section 3–4, “Claire, (being) pale from England...” One of the important characteristics of the intensive attributive process is that it cannot be passivized; the Subject commonly coincides with the Carrier, and rarely with the Attribute. The reason why an attributive clause is not reversible in this way is that the intensive attributive mode virtually involves “only one independent nominal participant, the Carrier, with the Attribute functioning to encode the ascription assigned to the Carrier” (for more, see Eggins 1994: 257). For example, it is impossible to reverse the following intensive attributive sentence, “She became sad,” to make ×“Sad was become by her.” However,

there seem to be some exceptions, particularly when the relational process is analyzed in combination with the material process (see Fawcett 1987 regarding the double roles of Agent-Carrier).

2. 3. 1. 2. 2. Intensive identifying processes

The intensive identifying process in relational processes differs from the intensive attributive process in both semantic and grammatical senses. In a semantic sense, an identifying process is not concerned with “ascribing or classifying, but defining.” So the intensive identifying process can be characterized as “x serves to define the identity of y” (Egins 1994 : 258), as in “John is the president.”

In a grammatical sense, unlike the attributive process, which includes only one independent participant (Carrier), the identifying process contains two independent participants: a **Token** that is a holder, form, or occupant that stands to be defined, and a **Value** that defines the Token by giving the Token “meaning, referent, function, status, or role” (Halliday 1985 : 115). Both the Token and the Value are expressed by nominal phrases. The identifying process is reversible, because the identifying process involves two independent nominal participants, unlike the attributive process, which contains only one autonomous participant (the Carrier). For example:

(10) John is the president.→
 Token Process: relational Value

The president is John.
 Value Process: relational Token

Normally, a semantic judgment will suggest which part of the sentence is Token or Value. A useful test to distinguish these two may be:

Token will always be Subject in an active clause

Value will always be Subject in a passive clause

(Egins 1994: 260)

The commonest intensive identifying verb is *be*, but other synonymous intensive verbs exist, such as *stand for*, *make*, *mean*, or *express*.

2. 3. 1. 3. Mental processes

Mental processes encode the meanings of feeling or thinking. They differ from material processes, which express concrete, physical processes of doing. Mental processes are “internalized” processes, in contrast to the “externalized” processes of doing and speaking (Simpson 1993: 91). Unlike the case of material process, it is odd to ask “What did X do to Y?” in mental process. Grammatically, all mental processes involve two participants:

- (15) I told her how to play the piano.
 Sayer Process: verbal Target Verbiage

The element “what is said” may be either directly quoted or indirectly reported. Disregarding clause complexity, or rankshift, as Halliday says (1994: 140), I shall simplify the labeling as follows, as this will suffice for our present analysis.

- (16) He said “I’m tired.”
 Sayer Process: verbal Verbiage

- (17) He said he was tired.
 Sayer Process: verbal Verbiage

2. 3. 1. 5. Behavioral processes

Behavioral processes are processes of physiological and psychological behavior, and they are on the borderline between material and mental processes. Behavioral processes “represent outer manifestations of inner workings, the acting out of processes of consciousness and physiological states” (Halliday 1994: 107). Behavioral processes are the least salient of Halliday’s six process types, and the boundaries of behavioral processes are indefinite. The participant who is behaving is called **Behaver**. Like the Sayer, Behaver is usually a conscious being, but the process is more like one of doing, as in material processes.

For example:

- (18) John is crying.
 Behavior Process: behavioral

Some other examples of behavioral processes are *sit, dance, sing, lie (down)* (near material processes), *think, watch, look, listen* (near mental processes), *talk, gossip, grumble, chatter* (near verbal processes), *smile, laugh, cry, frown* (physiological processes expressing states of consciousness), *sleep, breathe, cough, yawn* (other physiological processes) (Halliday 1994: 139).

2. 3. 1. 6. Existential processes

The last remaining process type is called existential. These processes are processes of existing and happening, as in “There was a little house on the big prairie,” “There isn’t enough space,” or “Has there been any problem?” Existential sentences typically have the verb *be*, and the word *there* is necessary as a Subject although it has no representational function. The object or event that is being said to exist is called **Existent**. An Existent can be any kind of phenomenon, such as a thing, person, object, institution or abstraction, action, or event. Existentials are represented as follows.

- (19) There was a little house on the big prairie.
 Process: existential Existent Circumstance: Place

Since no existential process example appears in the text considered in this article, no further explanation is needed.

So far we have seen the patterns of ideational realization from a semantico-grammatical perspective: i. e., the structural and semantic relationship within a sentence. However, the structural realization is not the only way of realizing ideation. Martin says that ideational contents (i. e., those expressed by transitivity patterns) can be “realized by lexical items rather than structures” (Martin 1992: 277–8; also Berry 1977b: 62; Fawcett 1980: 153, 218). In some cases “the ideational content is densely packed in nominal construction” (Halliday 1994: 352). For example, a sentence “the viaducts were constructed of masonry and had numerous arches in them” can be paraphrased nominally as “masonry viaducts of numerous arches” (Halliday 1994: 351–2). It will not be necessary to provide a complex, detailed analysis of this here. Suffice it to say that ideational content is realized in lexis as well as in grammatical relations.

In a simplest sense, there are two types of vocabulary: objective and subjective, although their boundary is not always clear-cut. Unlike those words that express an objective quality of a thing or situation, such as *red*, *yellow*, *striped*, *shiny*, *windy*, there are words that denote the speaker’s subjective attitude towards a thing or situation, or those that may arouse a particular image in a reader/

hearer. Examples are *lovely, attractive, fantastic, successful, valuable, meaningless*. Halliday terms the latter type of vocabulary Attitudinal Epithets, and they represent an “interpersonal element” (see footnote 3), serving an “attitudinal function” (Halliday 1994: 184) in addition to the ideational function. These terms may also be called emotive terms; there are both positive and negative emotive terms. Most of them are adjectives, but adverbs and nouns engender the same effects too (e.g., *beautifully, ruefully, superficially poverty, illness, success, inspiration*, etc.). They are associated with certain images such as those of weakness and rough life or just the opposite, some of which are exploited in the text to be analyzed in section 4, to create a certain impact and effect in narrative discourse.

Some elements in the transitivity resources discussed so far, which include some process types and participant roles, are fully employed in the description of main characters and to maintain and enhance a certain flow of discourse, as we shall see in section 4.

3. Carter’s analysis of literary text

Now let us turn to a text analysis presented by R. Carter. Before conducting his analysis of actual text, he touches on a few concerns regarding the function of language in text. He maintains that, firstly, “language is not a neutral entity,” and he challenges those who say that language is simply a neutral entity to convey

ideas. Like Halliday and other linguistic functionalists, he says that “language always relates to specific texts and contexts and usually to a context determined by social and sociocultural factors.” Secondly, he points out that language use is not independent “from the power of those who use it or control its use or enforce its use on others” (Carter 1997: 12). These remarks of his may sound extreme (not unusual for critical discourse analysts), but they have some truth in them. Acting on these views on language, Carter analyzes a text extracted from a story in a women’s magazine. He argues that it is interesting to note the ways in which different patterns of language are related to the two main characters.

It had been so different three years ago, the night she’d met Stefan de Vaux. There’d been a party. Bella always threw a party when she sold a picture because poverty, she explained, was a great inspiration. She’d been wearing a brilliant blue caftan, her fair hair twisted on top of her head, the severity of it accenting her high cheekbones, the little jade Buddha gleaming on its silver chain round her neck.

Claire, pale from England and the illness that had allowed her to come to Tangier to recuperate, had been passed from guest to guest—“Ah, you’re Bella’s cousin”—like a plate of canapés, she thought ruefully, attractive but unexciting. Until Stefan de Vaux had taken her out onto the balcony

and kissed her.

“Well?” he’d said softly, in his lightly accented voice, letting her go at last, and she had just stood there, staring at him, at his lean, outrageously handsome face, his laughing mouth, amber brown eyes. “Angry? Pleased? Shocked?” And she’d blushed furiously, feeling all three.

(*My Weekly*, 1 March 1987, cited in Carter 1997: 12)

It can be said that the plot of this story in a way represents that of the Cinderella story or is typical of the traditional success story of a female character. The Cinderella story goes that a girl named Cinderella was exploited and humiliated as a servant by her stepmother and stepsisters in a rich family. But she receives magical help from a fairy godmother to attend a royal ball, where she meets a handsome prince and attracts his attention, which brings triumphant rewards for her sufferings.

With regard to the language used, Carter argues that the transitive verbs are associated with male actions, e.g., “he (had) taken her out onto the balcony,” “he kissed her,” “he let her go.” By contrast, the intransitive verbs are associated with female actions, e.g., Claire “just stood there” and “blushed.” As examples of the most frequent intransitive verbs used in this sort of context, Carter lists *smile*, *blush*, *stare*, *moan*, and *sigh*. While Stefan de Vaux “takes actions and initiatives,” Claire “has things done to her and is cast in a passive and helpless role” such as being “passed from guest to guest.” Carter says “the syntactic

choices here encode a conventional gender positioning of men and women, one frequently patterned in romances and stories in similar genres.” He defines this language use as “the language of conquest and ownership” and the female character “doesn’t resist the invasion, at least as long as he has title or money or a name like Stefan de Vaux” (Carter 1997: 13).⁹⁾

4. Application of transitivity theory to the literary text:

Expanding Carter’s analysis

Carter’s analysis of the behavior and action of the two main characters is sound but is mostly restricted to the use of verbs and whether they are transitive or intransitive. By using Halliday’s transitivity framework based on meaning, a more detailed account can be made concerning the type of processes by which each of the two main characters is depicted. The following is a portion of the text, which I have analyzed semantically on the basis of Halliday’s transitivity framework, with participant functions and process types given within square brackets. The second and third paragraphs are chosen because they illustrate the state of, and the interaction between, the two main characters well. Elements added to aid the understanding of the reader are given within round brackets.

Claire [Carrier], (being) [Process: relational, intensive]
 pale [Attribute] from England [Circumstance : Place] and
 the illness [Actor: nonintentional] that had allowed

[Process: material] her [Goal/Medium/Actor]¹⁰⁾ to come to Tangier to recuperate, (Claire) [Goal/Medium] had been passed [Process: material] from guest to guest [Circumstance: Manner] —“Ah, you [Token]’re [Process: relational] Bella’s cousin [Value]”—like a plate of canapés [Circumstance: Manner], she [Sensor] thought [Process: mental, Cognition] ruefully [Circumstance: Manner], attractive but unexciting [Attribute]. Until Stefan de Vaux [Initiator/Agent] had taken [Process: material] her [Goal/Medium] out onto the balcony [Circumstance: Place] and (Stefan de Vaux) [Agent] kissed [Process: material] her [Goal/Medium].

“Well?” [Verbiage] he [Sayer]’d said [Process: verbal] softly [Circumstance: Manner], in his lightly accented voice [Circumstance: Manner], (Stefan de Vaux) [Initiator/Agent] letting [Process: material] her [Goal/Medium/Actor]¹¹⁾ go [Process: material] at last [Circumstance: Manner], and she [Behaver] had just [Circumstance: Manner] stood [Process: behavioral] there [Circumstance: Place], staring [Process: behavioral] at him, at his lean, outrageously handsome face, his laughing mouth, amber brown eyes [Circumstance: Place, Motion to]. “(Are [Process: relational, intensive] you [Carrier]) Angry? [Attribute] (Are you [Sensor]) Pleased? [Process: mental, Affection] Shocked? [Process: mental, Affection]” And she [Behaver]’d blushed [Process: behavioral] furiously

[Circumstance: Manner], feeling [Process: mental, Perception] all three [Phenomenon].

The table below systematizes the occurrence of each participant

Table 1: The occurrence of participant functions of each character

	Stefan de Vaux	Claire
Initiator/Agent in material processes (Goal-directed)	3	0
Actor/Medium in material processes (non-Goal-directed)	0	1
Goal/Medium in material processes	0	5
Sayer in verbal processes	1	0
Senser in mental processes	0	4
Behaver in behavioral processes	0	3
Carrier/Token in relational processes	0	3

function of Stefan de Vaux and Claire.

The statistical analysis clearly shows that Stefan de Vaux is involved in material processes mainly as an Initiator or an Agent in a Goal-directed material process, who affects and takes control of what is happening, e.g., “letting her go at last.” He also acts as a Sayer in verbal process, a participant who voices and can influence others, e.g., “‘Well?’ he’d said softly, in his lightly accented voice.” By contrast, Claire is mainly associated with Goal/Medium in material processes, e.g., “passed from guest to guest,” Senser in mental processes, e.g., “feeling all three,” Behaver in behavioral processes, e.g., “just stood there, staring at him...” and “blushed furiously,” and Carrier or Token in relational

processes, e. g., (being) “pale from England,” “you’re Bella’s cousin,” and (Are you) “Angry?”, or an Actor in a non-Goal-directed material process, that is, Medium (see footnote 10), e.g., “to come to recuperate.” These processes that Claire is involved in are mostly processes that are *internalized* and passivized and do not affect external events or other participants (at least not externally). A reversal of the conventional gender roles would produce a sentence like “Claire [Initiator/Agent] had taken [Process: material] him [Goal/Medium] out onto the balcony [Circumstance: Place].” Sentences of this sort are rarely found in such romantic fiction as this story, however.

Lexical choice also contributes to the discursual flow. Emotive terms expressing weakness and femininity are associated with female characters (e. g., *poverty, pale from England, the illness, recuperate, ruefully, attractive but unexciting*). The first phrase that introduces Claire especially symbolizes her weak, passive, and socially lower status; “Claire, pale from England and the illness that had allowed her to come to Tangier to recuperate, had been passed from guest to guest.” The sentence suggests that, if she hadn’t fallen ill she would not even have been allowed to take time to recover from her tough life. Usually, the Subject of a causative sentence such as this, is an element stronger than the Object, e.g., *The employer allowed the employee to take the day off*. But here the Subject (Causer/Initiator) is *illness*, which itself projects an image of weakness, and it suggests Claire’s very oppressed status, which may attract a reader’s sympathy. By

contrast, as the name *Stefan de Vaux* and the expression *outrageously handsome face*, suggest, the male character is depicted as an ideal model of status and power. So the contrast between the two main characters portrays the gender relations and ideologies that society stereotypically presents, constructs, and reproduces. Furthermore, the adoption of some French-sounding or French-origin words, not purely English words, such as *Bella* and *Stefan de Vaux*, adds to the story some noble connotations associated with the romantic dreams female readers may cherish. Also, setting this story in Tangier reflects a longing for a paradise in a far-off foreign country. Tangier in Morocco is at the crossroads of European, African, and Islam civilizations, where the Mediterranean meets the Atlantic Ocean. Tangier is a famous resort area where the sun shines down on a magnificent bay below lush green hills. Claire, who was introduced as “pale from England,” at the outset, is portrayed as being plunged into a dream world in a faraway foreign country, in a way that awakens subconscious associations with the Cinderella story.

5. Conclusion

This article aims at investigating the relationship between linguistic structures and socially constructed meaning in a narrative text. As I hope it has shown, by using some process types (e. g., material process, mental process) and participant functions (e. g., Actor/Agent, Senser, Carrier) in Halliday’s transitivity theory, certain patterns can be isolated within a text

so as to offer an objective linguistic foundation for interpreting the text. All of the transitivity resources discussed in this article, including some process types and lexis associated with the description of the main characters, can be exploited by the author in order to maintain and enhance a flow of discourse that represents participants interacting in a stereotypical portrayal of gender relations.

One may ask whether the author of the text considered was aware of the linguistic functions and terms discussed in this paper, in order to consciously create the discursal flow reflecting power relations. Probably not. The linguistic choices for describing each character in the text may not necessarily have been made because of conscious grammatical use by the author, but rather because the “semantic pressure” (Halliday 1994: xxiv) from the discourse for creating romance stories like the one reflecting conventional gender relations partially seen in this article, favored the selection of certain grammatical and process patterns for each character in the story. The significance of the semantico-grammatical choices for romance stories is the choice of one form over another, and not that given meanings inhere in given structures.

As I said at the start, I hope that this study will contribute towards an understanding of how linguistic and stylistic analysis of a text can be used extensively to clarify features and meanings

in any text—whether they are conventional or nonconventional patterns in illustrating participants and events in the story. The analytical method can be used successfully in either literary texts (including personal narratives or diaries) or nonliterary texts (including newspaper reports or articles or advertisements).

Notes

- 1) I would like to express my gratitude to Edmund Skrzypczak for proofreading an earlier version of this paper and giving me helpful suggestions.
- 2) Abstracts are summaries of the entire narrative at its beginning, Orientations are accounts that give the setting or context of a narrative, Complicating Actions are specific events that actually take place, Evaluations are accounts that tell the listener or reader what to think about a person, thing, place, event, or the entire experience described in a narrative, Resolutions are reports as to what finally happened, and Codas are formal endings of a narrative. Of these, Orientations, Complicating Actions, and Evaluations are essential elements in narrative telling. Labov and Waletzky claim that stories of personal experience make the simplest, but most basic, narrative structures (see Labov and Waletzky 1967 for details).
- 3) The ideational function is one of the three metafunctions that together characterize the passage of discourse in systemic functional linguistics. They are the ideational (what is going on), the interpersonal (who are taking part), and the textual (how the message is structured) functions.
- 4) Systemic grammarians use the term *clause* for *sentence*.
- 5) Notes on technical terms:

Actor/Agent: These terms are used almost synonymously at least for the purpose of this paper. In Halliday's functional grammar Agent, which appears in ergative interpretation (see section 2.3.1.1.), can be understood as a subtype of Actor; Actor is a doer in a broad sense while Agent is an entity whose action is particularly targeted at a Goal, e.g., *John kicked a ball*.

Goal/Patient/Affected: These terms are also used by different writers in the field to cover much the same meaning. This paper mostly uses the term Goal, following Halliday's terminology. In the sentence *John kicked a ball*, a *ball* can be a Goal/Patient/Affected/Medium. In *We lost in a close game*, *we* is a Medium in an ergative interpretation.

- 6) In traditional grammar, a transitive verb is one that requires an Object to be completed. The sentence *John kicked a ball* has the transitive verb *kick*. Intransitive verb does not require an Object. Thus, *Time flies like an arrow* contains the intransitive verb *flies*.
- 7) Systemic grammarians use the term *group* for *phrase* although they are not synonymous in a strict sense.
- 8) The process performed by an animate Actor is called Action process (e.g., *John opened the door*. *The boy fell over*, while an inanimate Actor is referred to as Event process (e.g., *The car backfired*). Action process can be further divided into Intention Process, in which the animate Actor performs intentionally (e.g., *John opened the door*), and Supervention Process, in which the process just happens to the Actor without his or her intention (e.g., *The boy fell over*).
- 9) The existence of *de* in a name traditionally suggests that he (she) is from a prestigious family in Europe.
- 10) In this sentence, "her" (Claire) has several roles. As an Object of "allowed," it has the roles Goal/Medium. As a Subject (doer) of "come to Tangier to recuperate," *Claire* has the roles Actor/Medium.
- 11) In this sentence also, "her" (Claire) has several roles. As an Object of "let," it has the roles Goal/Medium. As a Subject (doer) of "go," *Claire* has the roles Actor/Medium.

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