A Functional Analysis Of
Transitivity System In Literary Material
(With Reference to The · Voice · By V . S .
Pritchett)

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1 - Introduction

The central purpose of linguistic analysis of analysis of a literary text is to demonstrate both what has been what has been communicated and how it has been communicated . Since literary communication operates through language , all literary analysis rests ultimately on linguistic analysis which must taken into account every factor contributing to content , organization , grammatical structure and typographical features . It seems appropriate to assert that in order for such an analysis to be both complete and accurate , it should be effectively done according to a stylistic

approach which denotes the utility of the functional analysis of the English sentence and its role to express different aspects of meaning in addition to looking at the system of language at the same time ; otherwise , the analysis may lack any theoretical basis for generalization about how language is used . It is fairly obvious that language is used to serve a variety of different needs , but to represent the concepts of the real world , the structures of the language reveal certain lexical and grammatical features which show the formal organization to express certain aspects and specify the purposes behind using linguistic forms and stylistic devices .It is thus assumed that an analysis of a sentence or a clause according to propositional content , interpersonal relations and textural function is feasible and relevant for dealing with a literary material . since all these functions are reflected in the structure of the sentence or the clause , an attempt is made in this paper to show , by reference to English , the system of transitivity in a short story . It aims to investigate and explore the possibility of applying this functional procedure in the presentation and interpretation of this

system in any literary material . In terms of functional approaches to language analysis , the investigation of the patterns and roles of transitivity aims to find out the traits the writer has adopted to create or establish for the main characters through employing different types of transitive constructions which are appropriate and insightful for the theme , structure , purpose and function of the literary work .

With this in mind , this paper will try to survey the system of transitivity in English , then proceed to state its types , functions and varieties of presentation in the short story " The Voice " , by v . s . pritchett . At this point , I propose to draw attention to the effectiveness and vividness of transitive patterns as rhetorical , communicative and stylistic devices in literary language .

2 - Transitivity System : -

Transitivity is a linguistic aspect which refers to the structures of the clause as a representation of experience patterns or as expression of some kind of

phenomena in the real world ; it is the organization of the clause , including whatever features isolated from its grammar , to encode reality as apprehended in the experience of people . (Halliday , 1976 : 154) . It is natural to recognize that in any language , a vast number of different processes can be distinguished ; but these are reducible to a small number of process types , and the grammar of every language comprises sets of options representing broad categories of this kind . The most familiar and simplest model is that which groups all processes into the two categories of " transitive " and " Intransitive " . In this sense , " the distinction between what are called transitive and intransitive verbs , made in the grammatical description of many languages , essentially depends on a syntactic distinction between those verbs that may construct with a second noun (i.e. , other than the subject) under certain conditions , such as the noun exhibiting a particular case form or standing in a position in the sentence , or the whole sentence admitting the

possibility of transformation into a passive , and those verbs which may not so construct " .

(Robins , 1964 : 250) .

it can be demonstrated that transitivity system in English sentence can be understood in terms of the relations between the types of process revealed by the verb and the accompanying participating roles ; the basic semantic categories underlying the configuration of a sentence in its experiential structure are identified with the process , the participants in the process and , by extension , the circumstance associated with the process . These categories can be seen to correspond to the three major clauses of verbs , nouns , and adverbs . "

Processes include the type of 'state ' or ' action ' described by the sentence and they are largely associated with the verb . the participant roles are involved in the state or action – these are typically associated with Nps in construction with the verb , and describe functional relation to verb ." (Brown and Miller , 1980 : 288) . However , " the process is to be

widely recognized to cover all phenomena to which a specification of time may be attached .

" (Halliday , 1976 : 159) .

since any grammatical analysis is mainly concerned with the discovery of the patterns and functions in the world forms and sentence structures of languages , it is thus reasonable to support that the participant functions should be the roles undertaken by persons and objects and the circumstantial functions are the associated conditions or restraints as those of time , place and manner . It is these regularities of patterns and their functions that enable the linguist to classify clauses or sentences together as examples of various syntactic structures and as being made up of various constructions, and to group words together in word classes whose members behave alike syntactically and reveal similar paradigms of grammatically different forms (ibid .) .

In the sense in which the term is being used here , transitivity is regard as the linguistic expressions of processes including what is associated with them of

participant roles , and extending to what they may involve of circumstantial functions . In general , it is wholly unlikely that any one of study can monopolize all the valuable work comprising processes , roles and functions related to language structures , patterns and constructions . For this , the attempt is made in this paper to grasp , investigate and analyze the four major types of process sentences which underlie the basic transitivity system in English with examples to illustrate their uses and functions in different situations.

2-1 Material Action Sentences

A material action sentences is characterized by a process which denotes the notion of " doing " , and presupposes the performance of some action . As commonly applied , this process is inherently associated with an obligatory participant who performs the action and is called " the agent " . On the other hand , the other participant in the sentences is optionally associated with the process to represent " the goal " : some or something on the receiving end of the action . This might be related to as " Affected " so as

it would be more revealing for its functioned role (Halliday , 1985 : 103) . In fact , material action sentences are mainly concerned with actions or events and associated with participant roles of " Agent " and " affected " . Material action sentences all have corresponding equative forms as in the following examples :

1.	Yousif	broke	the window
	Agent	Process	Affected

But , we may find other occurrences of material action sentences associated with other participant roles illustrating the recipients of either an object or a service . This participant is normally related to indirect object and it is known as "Beneficiary " (see , Halliday , 1970 ,1985) . This can be shown below :

2. They	gave	the poor	some money .
Agent	Process	Beneficiary	Affected

3. He	made	me	a coat .
Agent	process	Beneficiary	Affected .

It is worth observing at this point that both forms of active and passive constructions which are possible options for the representation of action process can show the same function when the two participant roles of Agent and Affected are present , as in :

4 . The window   was broken   by Yousif .

Affected	Process	Agent
Subject	Predicate	object of a Preposition

The passive in this case serves textual or communicative functions . It allows for the topicalization or thematization of the affected participant . This has a bearing on the realization of the sentence function as in (4) above in which the affected becomes the unmarked theme and the agent is made late news by becoming last in the sentence or by being implicit or unexpressed , as in :

5 . The window	was broken .
Affected	Process

The Affected here , is given prominence by being thematized or topicalized to show emphasis or to attract attention .

2-2 Mental Process Sentences

Mental process sentences express experiences of perception , affection or cognition . This process is typically realized by verbs of sense , perception or mental state such as : feel , like , know ,

understand , etc . , which are commonly known as non – action verbs . The participants associated with this mental process are described as "Senser " , representing the one who performs standing for that which is experienced by the Senser" . (See , Halliday , 1970 : 154 ; 1985 : 108) . In this sense , the phenomenon , that which is perceived or reacted to , is not limited , as are the participants in action sentences , to the class of things , namely , persons , abstractions and the rest of the phenomenon on the plane of experience . What is perceived or felt or thought of may be a simple phenomenon of this kind , but it may also be what we might call a " metaphenomenon " : a fact or a report – a phenomenon that has already as it were , been filtered through the medium of language . Here words as well as things may participate in the process (Ibid .: 1970 : 153) .

This mental process can be illustrated by the following examples :

6.

I	hear	strange noise .
Senser	process	phenomenon

7.

Layla	Knows	my address .
Senser	Process	phenomenon

In view of what has been mentioned and realized in the preceding examples , it is sufficient to note that the senser should be animate and human – like being endowed with perception , mental state or consciousness so crucial for the experience that may be expressed . However , the phenomenon may denote a fact or a report as in :

8.

Mary	remembered	that she had got a present .
Senser	process	phenomenon (report).

To add to this, it can be demonstrated that mental process sentences are distinctively marked with general features of two – way realization as regards the possibility of having either the senser or the phenomenon as the subject while the sentence is still in the active voice.

Consider the following examples:

9.	I	Like	it .
	Senser	Process	Phenomenon .

10.	This argument	pleases	me .
	phenomenon	process	Sensor

It is generally recognized in modern approaches and treatments of semantics that mental process sentences can be produced with no phenomenon expressed in the surface structure, but there may be some reference to the circumstances of the act or the state, as shown below:

11. The researcher	thought	hard
Senser	Process	Circumstance

12. Selma	remembered	at last .
Senser	Process	Circumstances

2-3 Verbal Process Sentences

These sentences indicate the process of saying wich involves all kinds of symbolic meaning exchange .They may include such forms as tell , inform , suggest , promise , announce , etc . The participant roles typically associated with this category of sentences can be identified as Sayer , i . e ., someone or something issuing the message in the verbalized clause or phrase constituting the message being conveyed , and sometimes , the participant is the Recipient , i . e ., someone the message being conveyed to (Halliday , 1985 : 130) . The following examples illustrate the verbiage process :

13 . We	told	her	it was time to study
Sayer	process	Recipient	Verbiage

14 . I	said	it was time to forgive
Sayer	process	Verbiage

15 . The announcement	invites	us to join the army
Sayer	Process	Verbiage

2-4   Relational Process Sentences

Sentences involving this process can be regarded as sentences of " Being " since their central meaning revolves around the assertion that " something is " . This type simply expresses a form of relation between two roles , and may therefore be realized by such verbs as " become , seem , be and have " (Halliday , 1976 : 167 , 1985 : 112) .

It follows from the study of the basis of this process that two subcategories of relational sentences may arise depending on the sort of identification involved or the type of relation existing : the attributive mode is recognized where some entity is identified by

reference to some attribute which may be a quality or a circumstances. Thus , the relation between the entity and the attribute is that of class including the entity as a member . This suggest that the two elements differ in generality , but are , at the same level of abstraction (Halliday , 1985 : 123) . However , it is equally certain that these elements are the participant roles associated with the process and they are conveniently recognized as "Identified " and "Identifier " . The following examples illustrate the attributive mode of the relational sentences :

16 .	she	looks	happy
	Identified	Process	Identifier

17 .	The arrival	is	on Friday .
	Identified	Process	Identifier

A further point must be made as regard the identifying mode which is produced when one entity is used to identify another . The " identified " and " identifier " are two distinct entities which are alike in generality but differ in abstraction (Ibid . : 1970 : 155) as in :

18 .	Jack	is	the captain
	Identified	Process	Identifier

Equally illustrative of this process is the fact that both attributive and identifying subtypes of relational sentences have no passive patterns , since the sentences of the former type are non – reversible ; that is , the place of the two parts cannot be changed . For instance (18) above can be produced as (19) below :

19 . The captain	is	Jack
Identifier	Process	Identified

The crucial point to be made here is that other participant roles with relational process can be normally recognized whenever ownership is involved as the kind of relation between the two roles :
" possessor " and " possessed " . To this extent , these two roles may be introduced in either attributive or identifying modes , as in :

20 . He	has	no money .
Possessor	Process	Possessed

21 . The house	is	Ahamd ' s
Possessed	Process	Possessor

3- Transitivity in " the Voice "

" The literary material under analysis is the short story " The Voice " by V. S . Pritchett in his " Collected Story " published in London by Penguins in 1984 . The central character of the story is Morgan , the old priest in the church who was wicked and repudiated because he used to drink wine and chase servant girls inside the church . The other characters are Lewis , the new priest , and the warden of the town . The story depicts the bad conduct of " Morgan " and shows in an interesting narration his idiotic behavior and his departure from and disloyalty to the religious principles and social norms . As a result of his discarded deeds , he was punished by being buried under the debris of the church when it was bombed and destroyed while he was drinking wine and singing furiously and foolishly inside the church without any consideration or respect to the place or even to what was happening outside . Thus , he was punished without any regret or commendation from the inhabitants of the town . "

In this paper , it is suggested that the functional identification of transitivity system , as shown in the preceding examples , can be helpful and illustrative in analyzing and interpreting transitive patterns in this literary material , in particular , and in literary language , in general . Of central importance however , the systematic study of this system should prove useful and

insightful in illucidating the functions of such patterns and their significance in highlighting and enriching the conventions and purposes governing their presentation in literary texts . It will be recalled that this structural aspects has drawn the attention of many linguists , philosophers of language , and several literary critics to demonstrate how this system can be manipulated and employed by writers to produce a variety of transitive structures which create special effects and achieve aesthetic features .

It is by the virtue of such a system that the transitivity system may be applied to literary texts for a variety of purposes . In this respect , it is believed that the analysis and investigation of this system will incisively reveal some features of the literary language and their effective impact upon the readers .

3-1 Analysis of Roles

The aim of this section is to offer the four main types of process sentences and their presentation in the story . As far as their distribution is concerned , the story includes 53 sentences denoting the transitivity

system as a whole . The following table (1) shows the distribution of the main types .

Table (1)

The Distribution of Transitive Patterns

Process type	No .	Percentage of occurrence
Material	28	٥٢,٧ %
Mental	8	١٥,٢ %
Verbal	12	٢٢,٦ %
Relational	5	٩,٤ %
Total	53	١٠٠ %

What hits the eye in this table is the use of material sentences more than the other types , whereas the relational type is less used and has the lowest rank . Understandably , this result emphasizes the assumption that material type takes the greatest share in any literary

material due its effectiveness and rhetorical functions in different situations . This type is essentially used to reflect the agents , events and the affected participants in a literary text . On the other hand , the paucity of relational sentences shows the unimportant roles of identification in literary language due to little need for employing such patterns in literary contexts .

Another point to be emphasized in the text is that the central character as a senser can be easily perceived since he is known as a sinner ; therefore , he uses (8) mental sentences expressing his mental state and senseless confusing in his life . The other two characters (Lewis and the Warden) as defenders of religious values and conventional principles use a variety of transitive patterns . It has been noticed that the use of verbal sentences comes next in frequency to indicate the existence of two contradictory notions : evil and good , and to show the arguments and the conflict between two kinds of participants . It should be noted in passing that the verbal process sentences (12) shows the diversity in roles and participation between the main characters in the story . For a full account of

these roles , see the appendix at the end of this paper which includes sentences that represent the four types of transitivity system and their functions as employed in the story .

4 - Conclusion

The examples and explanation given above have shown that a detailed description of transitivity system can and should be integrated and utilized in analyzing a literary text to achieve different purposes and create striking effects . Moreover , this system can be applied to various literary texts as a stylistic device and aesthetic feature to highlight and sustain the literariness of the text by presenting a variety of transitive structures in both formal and informal situations .

Assuming the applicability of the main types of transitivity system to express the functions of different roles , this would indicate the writer ' s intentions , attitudes , or assertions which would lead to satisfactory manifestations and provide well – organized and highly – effective profiles of the literary text . Actually . it has

been recognized that any linguistic analysis of a literary material should take into account the systematicity and variety of transitive constructions which are skillfully employed to create syntactic and pragmatic options by text producers who use such devices intentionally to encode and highlight pieces of information in their texts . Therefore , these devices have to be interpreted not only as syntactic processes , but also as rhetorically motivated operations .

Essentially , it is reasonable to note that human experience can be conceived as involving agents acting on patients with particular goal and so on with the other types of roles and processes . If this is the case , we would expect that it might be possible to make a functional analysis of any literary material which called on functional roles of transitive structures . Furthermore , it is always interesting to consider how such functional relations and processes of transitivity system are reflected and enhanced in surface grammatical features and constructions in order for these structures to be interpreted semantically and communicatively in a literary text . It is concluded , however , that the way a

writer chooses to structure the information he wishes to convey or express should have an effect on the sentence forms he will use and the sentence structure should not be divorced from questions of function . This must be taken into account if we wish to have a properly rounded account of the way sentences are used to convey certain effects and literary alternatives in the information of sentence structure .

Appendix

Transitive Sentences Included in " the voice "

According to Their Functional Types

1. Material process sentences

1- The silent crowd raised their voices .

2- The bomb had brought down the front door .

3- The hymnboard announced the previous Sunday's ' hymns .

4- A penguin flew across the building .

5- Two of the rescuers took up their shovels .

6- The leader of the party held back the others .

7- The buried man was singing a hymn .

8- He got silver medals for it .

9- I ' ve got anything against the Welsh .

10- He could never pass that figure .

11- Thick dust choked them all .

12- No one stopped him .

13- The party above could do nothing .

14- God will forgive you .

15- He put his head and shoulders .

16- A voice answered him .

17- Tears picked the dust .

18- I have got my key .

19- He ' s got him .

20- You should have given that key .

21- Men have been risking their lives .

22- I ' ve ruined a suit .

23- It swung him .

24- Help me .

25- I wouldn' t have done the same thing .

26- I will do a bar .

27- Take the tenor .

28- Heat it .

2. **Mental process Sentences**

1- They saw the spade at least .

2- They heard him call .

3- They heard him smashing with it .

4- I have heard only one man .

5- He could see the flames .

6- Lewis hated both of them .

7- He knew Morgan was alive .

8- He remembered that Morgan was Welsh .

3. **verbal process sentences**

1- The warden said " That is Morgan " .

2- " God , I shouldn 't wonder " said Lewis .

3- " All the Welsh can sing " , the warden said.

4- " Not that " the warden said .

5- " Get out " shouted the warden .

6- " Morgan " , he said .

7- He called out " Morgan " .

8- " Morgan " he shouted .

9- " It 's Lewis , we are coming " , he shouted .

10- " Who 's that ? " asked the voice .

11- " Oh , God " shouted Lewis .

12- " only one leg , wait " the old man shouted .

4. Relational Process Sentences

1- Lewis was a middle – aged man .

2- Morgan was the nearest human thing to the devil .

3- It's Lewis .

4- It was a shade .

5- You have been a hell .

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