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A Transitivity Analysis of Female Characters in “The Boarding House” By James Joyce

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to pave the way towards understanding of the feminine characters presented in the short story “The Boarding House” by James Joyce. The researcher has adopted the transitivity analysis for the analysis and understanding the characters from top to toe. For this purpose data has been taken from the famous short story “The Boarding House” by James Joyce. The text has been divided by the researcher into clauses and then analyzed according to the transitivity model given by Halliday. The aim of the researcher was to understand the female characters with the help of transitivity processes. The researcher also intended to identify the most frequently used process which helped to dissect the female characters. The qualitative method has been used by the researcher for the analysis and discussion and at the same time quantitative method has been used for the identification of the most frequently used process. After analysis of female characters the researcher has found material process as the most frequently used process. Material process is found in forty (40) clauses.

Keywords: Transitivity analysis, transitivity process, material process, feminine characters

Introduction

It is a universal fact that people who use language and study about language are interested in finding out the fact that how people create meanings by using choice of words. Bloor and Bloor say, “When people use language, meanings are constructed” (2004 P. 2). The Boarding House is a famous short story written by James Joyce and published in 1914 collection Dubliners.

Language is an important phenomenon as Fairclough (1989, P.2) has rightly claims that “language is the most common form of social behavior, we need to interact and share our thoughts and feelings with other people. Every text is rich with different meanings. Meanings are not fixed for every one rather they vary from person to person. The meanings in a text can be analyzed through three meta-functions. They are ideational function, interpersonal function and textual functional.

The ideational meanings are derived through the processes found in a text. Processes are said to be the main verbs in general grammar. It is used to convey experiences information and facts that are unknown to the hearer. Interpersonal functions cover all uses of language whether it is concerned with social or personal relations. Textual function refers to the fact that language is a coherent and unified stretch of any spoken or written discourse. Ideational meta-function is used to achieve grammatical meanings for the process of understanding the text. Transitivity model is a tool used in ideational meta-function.

Halliday’s Functional Theory (2004) holds the view that experiences of the world are transformed into the words and then into the meanings. Transitivity theory claims that what we experience is a kind of reality and is made up of processes of seeing, doing, being, going and becoming. There are three main components of transitivity: the process (verb), the participant (subject or the person who is doing the action) and circumstances which are attached to the adverbial group.

According to Halliday (1994) Transitivity Analysis performs its function with the help of six processes namely: material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral and existential process. Each process has its own set of elements. This means with the help of understanding these

participants it is easy to recognize the process in a clause. According to the dictionary from Oxford language clause can be defined as “a unit of grammatical organization consist of a subject and predicate. During the transitivity analysis we probably found in a single clause a participant, process and circumstances.

Material process

Material process is a process of performing some actions and something that happens. In material process an action is presented which is performed by a participant present in the clause. Happenings and doings are recognized by intransitive and transitive material clauses respectively. Material clause has two other components which are actor and goal. As the name implies actor is the person who performs the action or it is the cause of happening of that particular action. While goal is the one who is affected by the process. But there are some other additional components found in material process namely: ‘range’, ‘initiator’, ‘scope’ and ‘Beneficiary’. Range is the other name of scope. Beneficiary is the other person who is getting advantage in the clause. Lastly, initiator is not same as the actor. He is the one who starts the action or it might not be wrong to say that he is the prime instigator.

Mental Process

Mental process mostly points towards the processes which are related to our senses. It has to do with the process of thinking, wishing perceiving and feelings. There are two main participants are recognized: sensor and phenomenon. Sensor is categorized in noun family because it is a human being who thinks, perceives and feels. The participation of sensor depends upon the kind of process. While phenomenon falls in the category of verb family which is being felt, thought observed and felt. Lock has divided the mental process in four sub categories, perception (it takes all the verbs related to senses), Affection (it considers all the strong feelings for someone or something), cognition (this term is probably found in psychology as it is related to mind) and volition (demand, conscious choice, need and desire). Halliday (1985) states that a complete mental clause must contain both sensor and phenomenon. But this is not a hard condition for a clause to have both elements in a sentence. There are so many sentences where there is a sensor but no phenomenon and it might be possible that there is phenomenon and no sensor.

Relational process

Relational process is the most important and basic process of Transitivity modal. This process can be defined as in a process of being and having. It means whether it is having a quality or it is used to define something. There are further two main types of relational process namely identifying process and attributive relational process. Relational attributive process can be recognized by applying reverse method, while the other remaining process is not reversible.

Behavioral process

Behavioral process is a process that reflects both mental and material process. Behavioral process is a hybrid process as it involves both psychological and physiological process. It includes behavior and behavior. Behavior acts like a person who behaves and behavior is the process or verb her. Most probably it includes only one participant who is

behaving like smiling, sobbing, coughing, doing, crying frowning etc. There are some fixed boundaries which helps to distinguish behavioral process.

Verbal process

Verbal process is a process of expressing our experience about the world. This includes all the processes related to speech e. g talk, reply, advice, praise, insult and many more. Verbal process has one participant known as sayer in verbal process and second element is verbiage. Sayer is simply defined as the participant who perform the action of speaking. And whatever is spoken or produce by the process of verbalization is known as verbiage. Moreover Halliday (1985) has classified verbal process in four following categories for the ease of reader.

1. Statement: report, news, expressing, claims
2. Questioning: inquiry, investigate, question, ask,
3. Offering: suggest, propose, promise,
4. Commending: order, command, instruct

Existential process

It is the least important process of Transitivity. It has only one participant known as existent. It is recognized by the use of copular word “there” at the beginning of the sentence.

Research Questions:

How is the character of women presented in “The Boarding House” by James Joyce?

Which process is most frequently used in portraying the females’ character in “The Boarding House” by James Joyce?

Methodology

The researcher has adopted a mixed method for the analysis of the short story. The researcher has divided the whole text of the short story into sentences and then into clauses. The researcher has found sixty-three sentences and one hundred and three clauses. For the purpose of data collection, the purposive sampling technique has been adopted. After analyzing the story, a table of numbers has been provided for the understanding of processes.

Literature review

Transitivity analysis is a model proposed by Michael Halliday (1994) which basically deals at the functional level of grammar and considers language as a social - semiotic of communicating meaning making technique. A number of researchers have found this theory and model fruitful in understanding different aspects of language.

Asad Mehmood, Roshan Amber, Sobia Ameer & Rabia Faiz from University of Sargodha, Pakistan have conducted a research in this same field of transitivity analysis which finds its roots in systemic functional grammar developed by Halliday. The topic of the research is Representation of Love in Wilde's The Nightingale and The Rose (2014). They have analyzed the short story to answer their research questions which are: to reveal the text structures can produce certain meanings and ideology which is hidden in the text. They have another aim of study: to discover the relationship between meanings and words. The researchers have selected the text of short story and divided the text into clauses and focused on the frequently used process, participant and circumstances that have been used by the writer. They have come up with a main research finding, that is examine the function of language as useful tool in

the short story "The Nightingale and the Rose" by Oscar Wilde in the light of Halliday's theoretical framework on transitivity. The aim is to find two different views of love via two major characters. They use a content analysis technique. They conclude that The transitivity analysis of Wilde's short story The Nightingale and The Rose show how the actions are performed through the use of material processes. We get a clearer idea from the verbal processes that describe the actions as well as revealing the situation and conditions. Furthermore this impact is strengthened by the relational processes. The physical actions are highlighted through these processes with give an outer view of the world portrayed in the story.

The very first research was conducted by pioneer (Halliday) himself. He has made an analysis of famous William Golding's The Inheritor. This research serves as a guide for the latest and upcoming researchers in the field of transitivity analysis. In this research, Halliday tried to show how the language structure can help in understanding the hidden ideology and theories presented by the writer. It is obvious that a sentence consists of a process, participant and circumstances in a writing. The main aim of the transitivity model is to find out the clauses and all these three elements from a writing and analyze the hidden meanings of the literature.

Yaghoobi (2009) has conducted a research on the topic related to the media. He has tried another genre and experiment it. He has investigated news structure of two different print media namely Newsweek and the Kayhan International. He has divided the news into clauses and highlighted all the three elements of transitivity which are found in the news language structure. His findings are quite obvious and clear as he states that the same news of Hizbullah and Israel powers are found inverse to each other because of the two different news platform. Every printed media possesses its own ideology and way of projecting the news in its own unique way. This is how a structure creates a difference between a same news by projecting different ideology.

These transitivity researches are only a couple. Among many, but still their aim is to show that how language designs, includes pattern and implicit ideologies and believes. The functional part of the transitivity model helps to understand the human association in social setting and tries to throw light on the hidden meanings and agendas.

Saeed Ahmad (2019) has conducted a research on the topic "Transitivity Analysis of the short story "the Happy Prince" written by Oscar Wilde. Saeed Ahmad has collected data from the short story and the systemic functional linguistics theory has been adopted to answer the selected questions. Text has been divided into six processes, participants and possible circumstances. Data has been organized in the form of tables and charts for the ease of the situation. After analyzing the data, he has discussed the analysis qualitatively and that's why the research is qualitative in method. The findings are quite obvious as he has found three main types of processes used mostly. He has found material process (43.41%), relational process (20.26%) and verbal process (17.04%) in the text. He concluded that most frequently occurred process is material process because the writer wants to show the dynamic and tangible actions in the story.

Another great work was done by an Indian student Supriya S Sakrikar (2019) having the topic "A Transitivity analysis

of Shashi Deshpand's Short story "And Then?". She carried an aim of identifying process types participant functions and circumstantial elements. She has also selected system of transitivity as a best way to understand the hidden aspects of the text. The aim of the text is to analyze the main character that is an old widow in terms of processes as she wanted to know that which process is mostly carried by the character. Descriptive qualitative method has been applied because this method allows the researcher to analyze the text in depth and detail. The researcher is free in terms of explaining the whole issue. The study at the end found as expected some participant functions with specific percentage as mental process (40%), material process (22%), verbal process (14%) relational process (5%) and behavioral process (5%). Keeping in view the above detail she has concluded the character of widow as a mentally strong character because the character has been found that the author has often indicated the character with mental processes like perceiving, thinking and feeling different kinds of emotions. The circumstance of Time-location is mentioned mostly in the story. The mostly presented participant is obviously the sensor because the mental process is always belongs to a sensor.

A thesis entitled "A transitivity analysis of Short Story 'No Witchcraft For Sale's by Doris Lessing that was written by Dewi Kurnia (133411066). She has selected the topic because of the interest in Transitivity analysis. The aims and objectives of the research work is to realized the transitivity in the selected short story and to find out the most appeared type of transitivity. This study has adopted the qualitative approach because it helps to describe in detail when, how, where and why something happens in a selected text. Qualitative research also helps to identify other elements of grammar. Transitivity analysis has used 'clause' as a basic unit of analysis that is why the text is fully divided into clauses for the further analysis. Data has been collected in different steps namely seeking and selecting, reading and reducing. The researcher came up with the conclusion that all the six types of processes are found in the text. Material process is found as the most frequently used process because with the help of this process the writer has created a complete plot story by making the reader aware of what is happening with whom and why is this happening. Systemic functional linguistics is a very interesting theory to explore the character or other elements beyond the sentence level.

A research work entitled Annals of Education Transitivity Analysis on "Maria" in "Clay" by James Joyce has been conducted by Abdul Bari Khan and Hafiza Sana Mansoor (2015). They have aims to explain the main character's personality named "Maria". The whole text has been divided into chunks and then into clauses in order to separate the elements of the transitivity model. The researchers have concluded that Maria is a very sober and intelligent character who is really a peacemaker in the whole story. They have proved their concluded statement with the help of different examples. In material process they have found that Maria has played a role of beneficiary for other people because she gives favor to the people around her. Mental processes are found more in number than material one. Researchers have found that she most of the time use to thought for good things because she love to have good memories. Maria behaves well throughout the story and she behaves very normally like other people.

Analysis and discussion

Relational process

Relational process is a relationship of having and being between two entities. Relational process occupies the fourth position having fifteen (15) clauses.

This clause is very helpful in getting vivid information about the character. In a clause,

“Mrs. Mooney was a butcher’s daughter”.

Mrs. Mooney is a symbol of powerful woman who has become this symbol not by birth or by luck but because of her work or strong determination. It is said that all the motivational personalities have survived in their life... this is the same kind of case. She is a daughter of a butcher. After marrying a foreman of her father she has faced a difficult time with her husband. This clause is presented as a base of a normal character who is going to be analyzed as a symbol.

“She was (relational) a woman who was (relational) quite able to keep things to herself: a determined woman”.

In this clause the word ‘able’ is serving as an attribute to her personality because in later analysis we have found things and situations in which she is placed and there she has improved herself as an ‘able’ woman. This clause is an example of attributive relational clause because another adjective is present in this clause that is ‘a determined woman’.

This adjective is not commonly found when usually writer prepare his pen to write a number of qualities of his main character. But in this short story, the writer has purpose fully added this quality to Mrs Mooney who is playing the character of a divorced woman and at the same time ‘a mother’ as well as an owner of a boarding house.

“Mrs. Mooney was a shrewd judge”

Mrs. Mooney is a sharp-witted woman who is always keep herself alert about the happenings around herself. Relational processes are found fifteen(15) in number and among which ten(10) processes are related to Mrs. Mooney’s character. With the help of relational (identifying and attributive) processes writer has provided us all the good and awful points of the character. She is so much accurate in predictions about herself that before his discussion with Mr. Doran, she was sure about the results of discussion. She said, ‘I would win’. She was sure because she was probably aware of all the situation. This clause is used by her two (2) times in the story. Perhaps writer wanted to show sow stress on this sentence. Contrary, the second mentioned female character is her daughter ‘Polly’. Out of (15) relational processes, only 5 processes are related to this character. This means that the writer has focused on the motherly figure rather than this character. Though the relational processes are less in number but they are complete enough to explain the character’s all important attributes. In a clause “she had light soft hair”, we are informed about the physical appearance of Polly.

“as Polly was very Lively” this explains the nature of a young girl in detail. It is also mentioned by the writer that ‘she is little vulgar this sentence has been made in a sense of her grammar. ‘She had (relational) a habit of glancing upwards’. Habits are different according to the personal characterization. Here in this clause, James Joyce has mentioned the habit of looking upward. This does not mean that it is related to some hidden motives of the character. Thus, relational process is found in fifteen clauses and this

process is used to explain the character of Mrs. Mooney with the frequency of 66%.

Material process

Material process is related to the environment in which some motions of activities are being performed by the character or the doer. In this short story the doer is really presented in action as we have found the material process in highest frequency and percentage. The character of the Mrs. Mooney and Polly is found in action mode in forty clauses. Each material clause plays a vital role in describing the character of the women. Material process is found in forty (40) clauses and this is the highest frequency of occurrence in this short story. After separating the material clauses in between the two female characters, we have got the frequency of 21 clauses related to the character of Mrs Mooney and remaining 19 clauses are found attached with the character of Polly. Material processes are the words and actions that plays supportive role in constructing the real character image. It helps to understand that what kinds of actions are in which the character wants to involves in and what are those actions which the character found unpleasant? This is the major aim of selecting the Transitivity analysis of this particular short story.

Mrs. Mooney is an active participant in the story. In a clause “she went to the priest” indicates that all the actions are taken by her after a complete thought. She is very well aware of the advantages and disadvantages of all her actions. She has decided to went to the priest for a decision and that is ‘separation’ from her husband. ‘she would give (material) him neither money nor food’. Here in this sentence the hidden person is her husband (him). She has decided to grow up her children by herself. That is why The author himself has awarded her with the attribute of ‘a determined woman’. “She had taken (material) her daughter home again”. Mrs. Mooney’s actions are very active in the whole story and here she is performing the action of taking her daughter home because she wants her daughter to be with her in boarding house. She is very quick in understanding the situations and taking decisions about the current situation. “Mrs. Mooney did not intervene (material). This is the time when she was noticing some thing between Polly and Mr. Doran but she is very precocious and waiting for the right time. That’s is why she did not found it a good thing to intervene between two lovers. Then we found a clause in which “she intervened”. After some time, she found a right time to interrupt the couple and ask them about their closeness. Some normal kind of physical actions like sit, do, paid, opened etc.

Actions are the reflection of thoughts of a person. What a person thinks he does so. On the other hand Polly is less active than her mother in short story but the difference is not much. The very first action performed by Polly is that she can sing (Material). This action is the symbol of young age or young soul. Polly is a young girl of nineteen and therefore such kind of actions suits to a teenager like her. “She tapped (material) lightly and entered (material)”. The relationship between Polly and a young boy named Mr. Doran is revealed by the writer through this sentence as Polly slightly tapped the door and entered into the room of a strange young boy. But the reality is something else. Polly is attracted towards this boy and they are in a relationship since long time. They are very close as in a clause “she throws (material) her arms round his neck”.

They are very much active in their relationship that they used to meet each other on daily basis. She is very emotional too. When she came to know about the truth that Mr. Doran did not want to marry her she has just decided to put an end to herself. She used to make herself ready every day and waits for the boy. Polly is a very decent and obedient daughter and a very good girl who is loyal towards her relationship.

Mental Process

Twenty-two (22) Mental processes are found and among which sixteen (16) are related to Mrs. Mooney and only six (6) are related to Polly.

“Knew when to give credit”. This line points towards the mentality of Mrs. Mooney’s internal satisfaction and brilliant timing of everything. As she had faced difficulties in life and now become a very experienced woman, so she knows everything before and her predictions about things are very good and obvious. In this clause, she knows how to handle things at the right time and that is why she is saying that “when to give credit to others. She is the owner of a boarding house and she knows how to tackle with things and situations.

“Knew that the young men were only passing the time away”

She also knows that her daughter is young enough to tempt others. And that is why she is not worried about the behavior of people present in the house as they use to try their luck on Polly. But her mother Mrs. Mooney is not worried at all as she knew that this is the behavior of people as they are not serious in their doings and they are just passing time. This clause shows that in that time this flirting might be taken as a regular habit of people around. And this is not a thing to be worried enough.

“When she judged it to be the right moment”.

She (Mrs. Mooney) is sharp in her senses and she does her work when the right moment comes. It might be linked with her case of separation. When she thought that their marriage is not strong enough, she puts her steps towards the priest for the case of separation and divorce.

“In this case she had made up her mind”. In the case of her daughter’s love case she has decided to ask them about the future planning and to give them only one possible option and that is “marriage”

“Things were as she had suspected”

Things were almost the same as she has expected them to be. Because being a motherly figure she knows inside out very well.

“She was sure” This is hint about the level of surety about things and they results are always the same.

“She wished(mental) to speak with him”. Mrs. Mooney now serves as a head of the family and she is also investigating the true relationship between Polly and Mr. Doran. she wishes only those things which are related to the daily life.

Polly is also a person who exists from inside. She has her own true personality and she wishes some things in her life like a normal teen age girl does. “she knew(mental)”

Polly is a charming and innocent girl but at the same time she is a sharp person who knows very well what is going on around her.

“she wanted(mental) to relight her candle”.

A time comes in a life of every person when he/she only thinks about his/her life. Polly found herself in a state of

being loved by a young man named Mr. Doran and that is why she wishes to be with that man every time. At the end a last mental process is used in Polly’s statement that she is missing something and then she remembered (mental) that she wanted to talk with her man.

Verbal Process

Speech is the representation of the experiences of the mind, (De interpretatione 16a 4-5). It has been rightly said that what a person speaks, reflects the inner most side of a person. Verbal process has three basic elements. A person who speaks is called a ‘sayer’ and this is the person who controls all the statement. In transitivity analysis verbal process is found as 5th most frequently used process. After doing analysis it has been found that the writer has presented Female characters as a non-active participant who speaks according to the situation and speaks when it needed the most. That is why female characters believes in action rather than speech in this story. They are presented as an active actor more than a speaker. They have been shown as a speaker in six clauses because speech is a kind of communication that is performed between two people and the short story has very less amount of communication between. According to analysis Polly is found as a speaker in four (4) clauses. Verbal processes related to Mooney are allowed and speak. While Polly’s conversation is found equally with her mother and Mr. Doran.

Behavioral Process

Behavioral process is found in those clauses in which a person shows his personality through his gestures and behavior. A person behaves according to his personality and nature. This is how Transitivity analysis gives us information about some actions and normal activities that a person does in normal routine. Behavioral process is found in twenty (20) clauses. Both the characters are found behaving in number of clauses.

“She surveyed (behavior)herself”. Mrs. Mooney after having a long discussion use to have a look upon herself. While Polly behaves like a child and according to the given situation. She is found in clauses as crying, laughing, flirting, looking and waiting.

Process	Total	Mrs. Mooney	Polly	Total percentage
Material process	40	21	19	$\frac{40}{103} \times 100 = 38.83\%$
Mental process	22	16	6	21.35%
Behavioral process	20	10	10	19.415%
Relational process	15	10	5	14.56%
Verbal process	6	2	4	5.82%
Existential process	0	0	0	0
Total	103	59	44	100 %

Conclusion

Halliday has presented systemic functional linguistics theory. Present study aims to investigate the females character present in the story. The researcher has found two female characters respectively. One female character is found as a mother while the other one is a daughter. Researcher has found the material process as mostly used process. Material process is a process of doing some

physical action and is a hint to show the active participation of the characters. The character of Mrs. Mooney is presented as a very strong woman who is very brave, active and strong woman while the character of Polly is presented as a growing young and beautiful girl. She is presented as an emotional character who is very serious about her relations. Thus, the present study is helpful in understanding the characters from all the perspectives.

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