Transitivity as the Grammatical Tool to Explore the Representation of Reality

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Abstract

The present paper is a theoretical study of the system of transitivity which is an analytical tool in Functional Grammar under Systemic Functional Linguistics, a novel approach to language study offered by Michael Halliday. Although, transitivity as a system has been comprehensively dealt by Michael Halliday and others in various studies, still the literature on the subject is not widely available and needs attention. Further on, despite the availability of the limited studies on transitivity many minor topics under it are underexplored and, therefore, vague.

The present paper has attempted to make a contribution in filling up deficiency in the transitivity studies. The sections related to the explanation of
- the causative and permissive agents,
- the subtypes of relational processes
- and the relationship between Circumstance of matter and Phenomenon of matter

have often been found indistinct in the extant literature on the subject and therefore these topics have been investigated with special clarity, system and lucidity which are the hallmark of all scientific inquiry and a prerequisite for all scientific discovery.

Keywords: Systemic Functional Linguistics; Functional Grammar; Experiential metafunction; Transitivity.

Introduction

Systemic Functional Linguistics (Eggins, 2004; Halliday, 1998; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Halliday, 1978, p. 212; Thompson, 2014; Butt, 1995; Fontaine, 2013) as an approach to language is a paradigm shift from the other dominant linguistic approaches which consider language as an abstract set of generalized rules detached from its context of use.

The focus of such approaches is the abstract structure and the syntagmatic rules of combination. SFL, on the other hand, argues that language is a social semiotic system used by a community of people to make meanings. The linguistic forms or the utterances are not random

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or abstract, rather they are motivated by the purpose or the meaning which the user wants to convey and, further, meanings are bound in the socio-cultural context of the users. Therefore, any attempt to study a linguistic text cannot be divorced from the societal network of relations that underlie such use of language. Thus, the functions of language are the determinants of the structures of language. The Systemic Functional approach, therefore, shows that functionality is an inherent trait of language, and the complete architecture of language is built around its functional roles. This accounts for the word *functional* in the name Systemic Functional Linguistics.

Thus, Systemic Functional Linguistics as a theory begins at the social context in which language evolves as a system of lexical and syntactic choices motivated by meaning and, therefore, it gives theoretical priority to paradigmatic relations. These paradigmatic choices are captured through systems, i.e., the linguistic structures, which are further captured through realizational statements. This leads to the term *systemic* present in the name Systemic Functional Linguistics. Thus, language as a conventionalized coding system is organised as sets of choices such that every structure of language, lexical or syntactic is chosen against a backdrop of various probable options and leads to another set of probable options from which the choice is made. In other words, in this system, each set of choices leads to another set of choices and so on and, thus, a network of choices is created.

Thus, SFL deals with language in actual use and focuses on the texts in their contexts. The context here refers to both the *context of the culture* and the *context of the situation*. While the context of culture deals with the aspect of appropriacy and inappropriacy, the context of situation is specified through *field*, *tenor,* and *mode*. In a text, the tenor and mode are realized by the interpersonal and textual dimensions of the meaning respectively, while the field is represented by the representational dimension.

In Systemic Functional terminology, these three dimensions of meanings are called the three *metafunctions* of the text. They are called metafunctions to distinguish them from ordinary functions or purposes which are just ways of using language and have no significance for the analysis of language itself. In addition to context of situation and context of culture, SFL also deals with meaning in reference to *ideology* which is a higher level of context. Citing the importance of ideology, Suzanne Eggins (2004) says,

> Whatever *genre* we are involved in, and whatever the *register* of the situation, our use of language will also be influenced by our ideological positions; the values we hold (consciously or unconsciously), the perspectives acquired through our particular path through the culture (Eggins, 2004, p. 10).

Further, every clause, in a text, has all of these three metafunctions mapped on it and, therefore, offers a three-dimensional meaning of the text. Among the three metafunctions, the Textual metafunction refers to the organisation of the text as a well-connected, coherent, and

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meaningful piece of writing or speech, the Interpersonal metafunction expresses the attitudes and the role relationships between the interactants in a linguistic event while the Ideational metafunction focuses on the representation of reality, both the physical reality outside and around the user and the inner reality of his consciousness. The Ideational metafunction further consists of two components: Experiential and Logical types. While the Logical aspect pertains to the type of relationships between the clauses within a clause complex, the Experiential metafunction which is the concern of the present study deals with the constituents within the clause and is concerned with the representation of content i.e., meaning. In consonance with the three metafunctions, Halliday has also incorporated three analytical systems in his theory. While the Textual meaning is explored through theme choices and the Interpersonal through mood and modality choices, the Experiential meaning is realized through the transitivity choices.

Discussion

Under the transitivity system of analysis, a clause is taken as a proposition representing events and processes of different kinds and transitivity aims to make clear that how the action is performed, that by whom it is performed and on what it is performed. In terms of functional labels, we can express what we have said about the content of clauses in terms of *processes* which involve certain *participants* and occur under certain *circumstances*. The processes are the core elements of the clause from the experiential perspective. A process is typically realized by the verbal group in the clause. In some cases, the process can be seen as including another constituent apart from the verbal group proper; this can be seen in the case of phrasal verbs. Further, every major clause normally includes at least one participant, which is normally realized by a nominal group. There can be up to two other participants in a clause. The circumstances which are the additional elements to enhance the meaning of the clause are typically realized by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases.

i.   Processes and Participants

The processes are of six basic types: *material*, *mental*, *relational*, *behavioural*, *verbal,* and *existential* and there are corresponding participants for each process. The material processes encode the actions of 'doing' while the mental processes encode the actions of 'sensing' and the relational processes cover the different ways in which 'being' can be expressed. Further, while material, mental, and relational processes are clearly mutually exclusive, the behavioural, verbal and existential processes, to a certain extent, are extensions of them. On the borderline between material and mental are the behavioural processes. These processes represent the outer manifestations of inner working of the consciousness and the physiological states of a person or a personified participant. On the borderline of mental and relational processes is the category of the verbal processes which encode the symbolic relationships constructed in human consciousness in the form of 'saying'. On the borderline between the relational and the material processes are the existential processes by which phenomena of all kinds are simply recognized to 'be' i.e. to exist or to happen. Thus, this completes the circle of the six process types.

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Different types of processes are described below in terms of their associated configurations of participant roles:

i) Material Processes

The material clauses are clauses of doing and happening. A material clause construes a quantum of change in the flow of events as taking place through some input of energy. The source of energy bringing about the change is typically the *Actor*. The unmarked present tense for material processes is the present in present rather than the simple present. The Actor brings about the unfolding of the process through time leading to an outcome that is different from the initial phase of the unfolding. The outcome may be confined to the Actor itself, in which case there is only one participant inherent in the process. Such a material clause represents a 'happening' activity and, using the traditional terminology, may be called an intransitive clause. Alternatively, the Actor may bring about the unfolding of the process thereby impacting another participant. This other participant is termed as the *Goal*. In other words, the participant affected by the material activity of the Actor is called the Goal. Such a material clause represents a 'doing' activity and can be called a transitive clause. The number of participants associated with the material processes can be one, two or three depending upon the nature of the material process (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 180). If there is only one participant, the material process is *intransitive* and can be probed as 'what did x do?' The transitive processes, on the other hand, have minimum two participants and are probed as 'what did x do to y?' where x and y are the two participants. For example,

> He walked up to them… (Lessing, 2012, p. 12). (intransitive)
> She wrote letters…(Lessing, 1999, p. 212). (transitive)

Further, the transitive material clauses may be represented by either of the two forms: the *operative* (active) or the *receptive* (passive). In the operative type, the doer of the action is also the subject of the clause and both the roles are mapped on to the same constituent. In the receptive, however, the subject of the clause and the doer of the action are different (cf.: Halliday 2004: 179). Also, the operative processes are probed by 'what did x do to y?' while the receptives are probed by 'what happened to y?' For example,

> They snapped the handcuffs on him… (Lessing, 2012, p. 12). (operative)
> He was pursued by bad luck (Lessing, 2012, p. 47). (receptive)

Further, material processes do not necessarily represent concrete physical actions, they may represent abstract events too. Thus, they may be classified as *concrete processes* and *abstract processes* (cf.: Halliday 2004: 196). For example,

> …and he <u>straightened</u> himself after setting down the tray (Lessing, 2012, p. 154). (concrete)

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…and <u>accepted</u> her often unjust rebukes without even lifting his eyes off the ground (Lessing, 2012, p. 142). (abstract)

In addition, material clauses may be recognised in terms of two more subtypes based on the nature of the outcome affecting the Actor of an intransitive clause and the Goal of a transitive clause. If the Actor or the Goal is construed as being brought into existence by the unfolding of the process, the clause is termed *creative* while if a pre-existing Actor or Goal is construed as being transformed as the process unfolds, the clause is labelled *transformative* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 184). For example,

A thick weal <u>pushed up</u> along the dark skin of the cheek as she looked… (Lessing, 2012, p. 119). (creative)
So, I <u>beat</u> the veal flat… (Lessing, 1999, p. 323). (transformative)

Finally, material processes may also be of *intentive* or *superventive* types. In intentive type, the Actor performs the action willingly while in superventive type the action is performed without the will of the Actor (Burton, 1982, p. 199). For example,

I ate the pie. (intentive)
I cut my finger while chopping the onions. (superventive)

Though, the two most frequent participants in material clauses are the Actor and the Goal, there are other less frequent participants also associated with the material processes. One among these is the *Scope* or *Range*. Often there are transitive material processes which do not have the Goal in the usual sense. Rather the second participant, in such cases, is a continuation of the process itself and is not affected by the material action. There is a close relationship of dependence between the *process* and this second participant. Halliday terms this Goal-like participant, Scope or Range. The Scope clause can be probed by the question 'what did x do to y?' Halliday suggests that a Scope must specify one of the following two things:

• Either it should be restatement or continuation of the process itself. Here, the Scope is derived directly from the verbal meaning itself, and just one verbal element can substitute both the process and the Goal. Like in 'do a dance' or 'sing a song' only 'dance' or 'sing' can suffice. Also, it may be created by the use of dummy words like 'do', 'have', 'give', 'take', 'make' etc. For example,

Meanwhile Molly, talented in so many directions, danced a little -but she really did not have the build for a ballerina; <u>did a song and dance act in a revue</u>… (Lessing, 1999, p. 16)

• The second type of Scope expresses the domain or extent of the process. For example,

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As I went past he instinctively <u>assumed the 'mensch-pose'</u>…(Lessing, 1999, p. 529)

In certain cases, when the material process is 'give' or a semantic equivalent of 'give', it has three participants and it may be probed as 'what did x do to y to z?' Thus, in addition to the Actor and the Goal, these material clauses have one more participant which, kind of, benefits from the process. This is called the *Beneficiary*. For example,

He now impatiently handed <u>Molly</u> the key that was loosely bundled inside her scarlet scarf (Lessing, 1999, p. 14). (Beneficiary)

Further, at times, the outcome of the material activity is a change in the attributive state of the Actor and the Goal. This outcome is used to construe the resultant qualitative state of the Actor or Goal after the process has been completed and is called *Resultative Attribute*. There is also a non-resultative variant of the Attribute called the *Depictive Attribute* which specifies the state in which the Actor or Goal is when it takes part in the process (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 195). In other words, Depictive Attributes refer to the qualitative state of the Actor or the Goal which is not a result of the process. Thus, it may be said that while Resultative Attribute construes the state of 'becoming', the Depictive Attribute refers to the state of 'being'. See the examples given below:

At this he stopped <u>still</u>… (Lessing, 2012, p. 119). (Resultative Attribute)
The strawberry man served her, <u>non-committal</u> (Lessing, 1999, p. 13). (Depictive Attribute)

ii)   Mental Processes

The mental processes are the processes concerned with the experience of the world of consciousness. They include verbal elements enacting the activities of thinking, feeling, perceiving and inclining and are therefore divided into the following classes:

• *Cognitive*- verbs of thinking, knowing or understanding
• *Emotive*- verbs of liking, fearing
• *Perceptive*- verbs of seeing, hearing, etc.
• *Desiderative*- verbs of wanting or desiring

The unmarked present tense for mental processes is simple present tense and this forms the significant difference between mental and material processes. The other important difference is that while material processes may have one or more participants, a mental process must always have two participants. Intransitive mental process clauses are not possible. Moreover, unlike a material process, the mental process must have a conscious human participant. This participant which feels thinks or perceives must be either a human or an anthropomorphized non-human. This participant is called the *Senser* (Eggins, 2004, p. 227).

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The second participant in a mental process clause is called the *Phenomenon*. The Phenomenon is that which is thought, felt, perceived or desired by the Senser. For example,

> She could see his great shoulders, the shape of his head, the glistening of his eyes (Lessing, 2012, p. 204). (Phenomenon)

The Phenomenon may also be an embedded clause. When embedded, the Phenomenon is either an *act* or a *fact*. The Phenomenon: act is typically restricted to the mental activity of perception and is grammatically realized by non-finite clause, functioning as simple noun. For example,

> I hear him walking up and down overhead, or coming halfway down the stairs… (Lessing, 1999, p. 543). (Phenomenon: act)

> She allowed him to do as he liked, remaining quiet under the warmth of his hands, smiling at him (Lessing, 1999, p. 208). (Phenomenon: act)

The second type of embedded Phenomenon is what Halliday calls the Phenomenon: fact. A fact is a finite clause and is usually introduced by 'that' and occurs in the functional role of a simple noun. For example,

> Tony realized that she was trying to assert herself: she was using his presence there as a shield in a fight to get back a command she had lost. And she was speaking like a child challenging a grown-up person (Lessing, 1999, p. 188). (Phenomenon: fact)

The feature of reversibility further distinguishes mental processes from the material processes. This is different from variation in terms of active and passive voice. For example, 'I hate injections' and 'Injections piss me off' are reversible clauses (Eggins, 2004, p. 229). Further, in case one of the two participants of a mental clause is apparently absent, it must be retrieved from the context in order for the clause to make sense. Else, in case the Phenomenon is completely absent, the mental clause must project and all mental processes, except those of perception, can project. The perceptive clauses project under rare circumstances. For example,

> Anna heard, 'so why should we pay just what we would in the shops?' (Lessing, 1999, p. 12).

Projection is one kind of Logical relationship that may exist between two adjacent clauses. Projection describes the relationship conventionally known as direct or quoted thought and indirect or reported thought. In other words, mental processes with projection either quote or report ideas. It is important to note that projection is not same as embedding or rank shifting. It does not depend on any fact noun, instead, there is a Logical dependency between two clauses. The projecting clause is the clause which contains the mental process verb and it may

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occur before or after the projected clause. The two clauses which are in a projection relationship may be dependent upon each other or they may be independent. In case, the relationship is that of dependency, the *projected clause* is reported, else it is quoted. With most mental processes of cognition both reporting and quoting is possible while with mental- emotive processes, only reporting is possible. The example of a mental clause with projection is given below:

> She thought: <u>While I stood here with my eyes shut he was looking into my face and imagining it under him</u> (Lessing, 1999, p. 373). (Projected Idea)

iii)   Relational Processes

The relational processes construe the state of being, with the static location in space, unfolding inertly without any input of energy (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 211). These processes construe both the outer experience of the material world and inner experience of the consciousness but unlike the material and mental processes, they construe the experience as 'being' rather than 'doing' or 'sensing'. The relational processes are typically realized by the verb 'be' or its semantic variants. The unmarked tense for these processes is simple present and past. In relational clauses, there are inherently two aspects to the state of being. These are realized by two participants and a relationship of being is set up between two separate entities. In simple words, there is always something which describes something in terms of some attribute or some identity. These two distinct modes of being are respectively called- *attributive* and *identifying*. For example, 'She is pretty' is attributive while 'She is the prettiest girl in the town' is identifying.

In the attributive mode, an entity has some class ascribed or attributed to it. Structurally, we label this class the *Attribute*, and the entity to which it is ascribed is the *Carrier*. In case of identifying mode, the entity which is defined is called the *Identified* and its descriptive identity is called the *Identifier*. Across the attributive-identifying axis, the relational processes are also classified as intensive, circumstantial, and possessive. The two systems intersect to define sub-categories of relational clauses. These different sub-categories are further elaborated in the grammar of relational clauses.

• In the *intensive type* of relational clauses, the most typical verb is 'be' which establishes either the relationship of attribution or identity. Further, the nominal group realizing the function of Attribute is indefinite and construes the class membership while the Identifier is typically definite and the lexical verb of the verbal group realizing the identifying process is equative.
In the case of *attributive-intensive* type, the Attribute is realized in two ways- Attribute as an 'entity' realized by a nominal group with a common noun as the head word preceded by an indefinite article and Attribute as a 'quality' realized by an adjective. It cannot be a proper noun or a pronoun since these do not construe classes. Refer to the examples below,

> The boy Tommy was <u>a product of this marriage</u> (Lessing, 1999, p. 7). (Attribute-Entity)

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She was <u>stunned and outraged</u>; (Lessing, 2012, p. 41). (Attribute-Quality)

In case of *identifying-intensive* type, the Identified is the holder of an identity and the processes are distinguished to be reversible. Refer to the example given below,

Molly was <u>the product of what she referred to as 'one of those 'twenties marriages</u>' (Lessing, 1999, p. 7). (Identifier)

• In the *circumstantial type*, the relationship between the two terms is one of time, place, manner, cause, accompaniment, role, matter, or angle. In the *attributive-circumstantial*, the circumstantial element is an Attribute that is being ascribed to some entity. This is generally construed in the form of Attribute or else, in rare occurrences, the circumstantial relation is construed in the form of process so that the circumstantial sense is included in the process. (For example, the word 'occupies' has both the sense of 'being' and 'location'). In the former case, the Attribute is realized by a prepositional phrase and in the latter, it is construed as realized by a verb (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 240). Further, unlike Intensive Attributes, Circumstantial Attributes frequently have a definite nominal group. An example of attributive-circumstantial clause is given below:

I was still <u>in my dressing-gown</u>… (Lessing, 1999, p. 532). (Circumstantial Attribute)

In *identifying-circumstantial mode*, there is an equative relationship between two entities and, similar to attributive- circumstantial-type, this pattern may be organized semantically in either of the two ways i.e., as a feature of the participant or as a feature of the process. In case, the circumstantial information is encoded in the participants, both the entities i.e., Identified and the Identifier encode certain feature of time, place or manner, etc while the verbal element remains intensive, i.e., a form of 'be'. For example,

That day was the first day he raised his voice…

On the other hand, in case of circumstantial process, verbs such as 'take up', 'follow', 'cross', 'resemble', 'accompany', etc. are used (Eggins, 2004, p. 246). These verbs include the circumstantial information also. For example,

The concert took three hours.

But all said, it must be admitted that the line between attributive and identifying is less clear in the circumstantial than in the intensive type of relational clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 243).

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● *Possessive processes* encode meanings of ownership, part-whole relations, containment, involvement etc. between the participants of the relational clause such that one entity possesses another. Unlike the intensive-relationals, the criterion of definitiveness is not distinctive in the case of possessives. Also, they are distinctive for not being reversible. In *attributive-possessives*, possession is generally encoded through the *process*, though it is also possible through the participants. In the example given below, the possession is through the process.

> He had had a cottage in the country for years… (Lessing, 1999, p. 14). (Attributive-possessive)

In *identifying-possessives*, possession may again be expressed either through the participants, or through the process. When possession is expressed through the participants, the intensive verb 'be' is used and in case the possession is encoded in the process, it is generally realized by the verb 'own'. The other commonly occurring verbs in this function are 'contain', 'include', 'involve', 'comprise of', 'consist of' and 'provide'(Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 246). Refer to the example given below:

> The house was her sister's. (Identifying-possessive through participants)
> Her sister owned the house. (Identifying-possessive through process)

iv)   Behavioural Processes

Halliday describes these processes semantically as a halfway house between mental and material processes. They realize meanings which have characteristics of both material and mental process. Behavioural processes typically realize the physiological and psychological behaviour like laugh, smile, cough, look, listen, watch etc. Behavioural processes have a close relationship with mental processes. At times, this difference is minimal, e.g. 'look at' is behavioural but 'see' is mental, 'listen to' is behavioural but 'hear' is mental. But, unlike mental processes, behavioural processes generally have only one participant. The obligatory one participant of behavioural processes is called the *Behaver* and just like the Senser in the mental process clauses, it is typically a conscious being. In case there is a second Scope-like participant, it is called the *Behaviour*. The example of a behavioural process with a Behaviour is given below:

> I watched his face put on that mask of bluff, good-natured tolerance which is the mask of corruption in this particular time…(Lessing, 1999, p. 57) (Behaviour)

v)   Verbal Processes

They are the processes to realize spoken action. A verbal process typically contains three participants: *Sayer, Receiver* and *Verbiage.* The Sayer is the participant which initiates

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the verbal activity. It should not necessarily be a conscious human being but anything capable of releasing a verbal signal. The Receiver is the one for whom the verbal activity is initiated and reminds of the Beneficiary of the material process. It may occur with or without a preposition depending on its position in the clause. For example,

> …she was speaking <u>to him</u> with exactly the same flirtatious coyness with which she had spoken to himself (Lessing, 2012, p. 177) . (Receiver)

The Verbiage is a nominalised statement of the verbal process, a noun expressing some kind of verbal behaviour. For example,

> She would burst into exuberant tears, say <u>unforgivable things</u>…(Lessing, 1999, p. 10). (Verbiage*)*

In addition to these three, there may be a fourth participant in case of verbal clauses called the *Target*. The Target occurs only in a sub-type of verbal clause and construes the entity that is targeted by the process of saying. For example,

> The farmers about him he knew called <u>him</u> 'Jonah'(Lessing, 2012, p. 47). (Target)

Like mental processes, verbal processes also have the distinctive capacity to project a second clause by either quoting or reporting. In their case, quoted or reported clauses are called *Projected Locutions*. A relationship of independence between the two clauses is called quoting while that of dependency between projected and projecting clause gives reported speech. The projecting clause may occur before or after the projected clause. For example,

> '<u>Boss has keys</u>,' he explained…(Lessing, 2012, p. 59) (Projected Locution)

vi)   Existential Processes

The other type of 'being processes' are existential processes. They construe the Ideational meaning of 'simply existing'. Thus, they are different from the relational processes as in the case of relational processes, things always exist in relation to other things and are assigned attributes or identities while existential processes represent experience by positing that there was / is something. The structural use of 'there' is the identification marker of the existential processes. It does not carry any Experiential meaning and must be distinguished from the adverb of location and, therefore, is not assigned any functional label in the transitivity system. Thus, there is just one participant in an existential process which is called the *Existent*. For example,

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Everywhere there was <u>evidence of breakdown in will (Lessing, 2012, p. 157)</u>. (Existent)

ii.   Causative Agents

In certain syntactical constructions, there is an additional nominal element which superimposes over the action such that it 'causes', 'makes' or 'leads' the action. This nominal element is called the *Agent*. The verbal element realizing the causation and acting as the superimposing process in such constructions is called the *causative*. The causatives do not form an independent category of processes but they may be present in all processes except the existential processes. The main action is present in the embedded clause following the causative verb. Thus, alternately, if causation is considered a material action, this might be considered a case of embedding in material clauses. The examples of such causative Agents are given below,

<u>The mere idea of being without him</u> causes a black cold fear to enclose her…(Lessing, 1999, p. 196). (Agent causing material action)

<u>The knowledge that the man still followed her, grinning unpleasantly</u>, made her want to break into a run of panic (Lessing, 1999, p. 374). (Agent causing desiderative action)

iii.   Permissive Agents

Another similar type of syntactical construction is observed when an Agent 'allows', 'permits' or 'lets' a doer do something. These types of superimposing processes may be called *permissive type*. These syntactic constructions are also possible with all kinds of processes except the existential processes. In the example given below, the Attribute of the relational clause has been ellipted and can be retrieved from the context (mentioned in clause i).

- He was off his head, talking crazily to himself, wandering in and out of the bush with his hands full of leaves and earth (Lessing, 2012, p. 12).
- <u>They</u> let him be…(Lessing, 2012, p. 12). (Agent allowing relational process)

Further see,

<u>She</u> allowed him to do as he liked, remaining quiet under the warmth of his hands, smiling at him (Lessing, 1999, p. 208). (Agent allowing material process)

iv.   Circumstances

The last type of structures, in a clause, is the circumstantial element. As the name suggests, they give additional information regarding the type of circumstances under which the

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action takes place like 'when', 'where', 'how', 'with who' etc. They may occur infinitely in a clause. The circumstances can be best identified by considering what probe is used to elicit them. They are typically realized by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases and, in rare instances, by nominal phrases. Also, when the embedded structures, in the clause, provide circumstantial information about the process, they may be analysed in their transitivity role of circumstances. For example,

> 'Then come up and have some coffee and tell us,' said Molly, <u>her face vivid with challenge (Lessing, 1999, p. 12)</u> . (Circumstance of Accompaniment-Comitative)

> Yet I was also sad, <u>knowing it would not last long (Lessing, 1999, p. 577)</u>. (Circumstance of Cause-Reason)

The brief description of the circumstantial elements of various types is given below:

i)   Extent

The *Circumstance of Extent* locates the extent of the occurrence of the Experiential activity in space or time or as number. It may occur with or without preposition, the most usual preposition being 'for'. There are three types of Extent*: Distance*, *Duration* and *Frequency*. The typical interrogative probes to elicit them are 'how far?', 'how long?' and 'how many times?' respectively. See the examples given below,

> On his big chest another red drop fell and trickled down <u>to his waist(Lessing, 2012, p. 119)</u>. (Extent- Distance)

> She fought to control her voice, and spoke <u>after a few minutes</u> in a half whisper…(Lessing, 2012, p. 165). (Extent- Duration)

> She <u>hardly</u> saw him…(Lessing, 2012, p. 35). (Extent- Frequency)

ii)   **Location**

The *Circumstance of Location* construes the location of the occurrence of the *process* in space or time. Thus, the Circumstance of Location is divided into two categories- *Location-Spatial* and *Location-Temporal*.

The interrogative probes of Location are 'where?' and 'when?'

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• Space includes not only the concrete space but also the abstract space. The place dimension includes not only static location in space, but also the source, path and destination of movement. The Circumstance of Location-Spatial is illustrated below:

> Her limbs sagged <u>under her</u>…(Lessing, 2012, p. 205). (Location- Spatial)

• Similarly, Time includes not only the static location in time, but also the temporal analogues of source, path, and destination. The example of the Circumstance of Location-Temporal is given below:

> <u>When she sat down again</u> she shook out her hair…(Lessing, 2012, p. 185). (Location- Temporal)

Manner

The circumstantial element of *Manner* construes the way in which the process is actualized. Manner comprises four subcategories: *Means, Quality, Comparison* and *Degree*. They are one of the most widely occurring circumstantial elements. The general probe to elicit the Circumstance of Manner is 'how?'

• Means refers to the mode whereby a process takes place. The interrogative forms are 'how?' and 'what with?' to elicit this type of circumstantial element. Refer to the example given below:

> She was speaking <u>in a new voice for her, a voice she had never used before in her life (Lessing, 2012, p. 79).</u> (Manner- Means)

• Quality is expressed by an adverbial group with -ly adverb typically as the Head. The interrogative probe to elicit Circumstance of Quality is 'how?' Less commonly, Quality is realized by a prepositional phrase. The general type is one where the preposition is in or with and the Head word of the nominal group is the name of Manner. The Circumstance of Manner-Quality is exemplified below:

> He replied <u>gently</u>, to everything she said…(Lessing, 2012, p. 68). (Manner-Quality)

> His lank hair had for once achieved grace, and lay across his forehead <u>in a full springing wave (Lessing, 1999, p. 110)</u> (Manner- Quality) .

> He went to Nigeria <u>with unexpected suddenness</u> (Lessing, 1999, p. 212). (Manner- Quality)

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• Comparison is typically expressed by a prepositional phrase with like or unlike or an adverbial group of similarity or difference. The interrogative probe for it is 'what..like?'. Refer to the example given below:

> The trees advanced in a rush, <u>like beasts</u>…(Lessing, 2012, p. 205). (Manner-Comparison)

• Degree is typically construed by an adverbial group with a general indication of degree and is probed by the interrogative 'how much?' The example given below illustrates the Circumstance of Manner-Degree:

> Being alone in the world had no terrors for her <u>at all</u>…(Lessing, 2012, p. 35). (Manner- Degree)

iii) Cause

The circumstantial element of *Cause* construes the reason for which the process is realized. It includes the reason which leads to the actualization of the process and the purpose which is supposed to be met for which the process is actualized. Also, in addition to the reason and the purpose, both of which tend to be eventive, there is another kind of cause that tends to denote a person on whose behalf the action takes place. Thus, the Circumstance of Cause comprises of three sub-categories- *Reason, Purpose,* and *Behalf*. The interrogative probes for them are 'why', 'what for' and 'who for?' respectively.

• Since, the Circumstance of Reason represents the reason for which a process takes place, it includes the sense of 'because'.

> Her childhood had been disastrous, <u>since this marriage only lasted a few months</u> (Lessing, 1999, p. 7) . (Cause-Reason)

• The Circumstance of Purpose represents the purpose for which the action takes place so it conveys the sense 'in order to'. For instance,

> Jackson bent down <u>to raise him</u>… (Lessing, 1999, p. 139). (Cause-Purpose)

• *The* Circumstance of Behalf represents the entity, typically a person, on whose behalf or for whose sake the action is undertaken. For example,

> ..it was all right <u>for real men</u> to drink and not to shave and disregard their looks (Lessing, 1999, p. 138). (Cause-Behalf)

iv) Contingency

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The *Circumstance of Contingency* specifies an element on which the realization of the process depends. It is categorised as *Condition, Concession* and *Default.*

• The Circumstance of Condition construes the circumstances which must be fulfilled in order for the process to be realized. It conveys the sense of 'if'. It is generally expressed by prepositional phrases with complex prepositions like 'in case of', 'in the event of', 'on condition of' etc. For example,

> There is a type of mind, like Willi's, that can only accept ideas <u>if they are put in the language he would use himself</u> (Lessing, 1999, p. 87). (Contingency-Condition)

• The Circumstance of Concession construes the sense of 'although'. It is expressed by prepositional phrases with the prepositions 'despite', 'notwithstanding' or the complex prepositions 'in spite of', 'regardless of' etc. For instance,

> Richard was delighted, <u>although he still blamed Molly's life for his son's blindness</u> (Lessing, 1999, p. 618). (Contingency-Concession)

• The Circumstance of Default has the sense of negative condition i.e., 'if not', 'unless'. It may be expressed by prepositional phrases with the complex prepositions 'in the absence of', 'in default of' etc. This is illustrated below:

> But never played <u>unless for business reasons</u> (Lessing, 1999, p. 14). (Contingency-Default)

v) **Accompaniment**

Accompaniment is a form of joint participation in the process and probes the question 'with whom?' and 'who/what else?' but not 'who/ what?' It is of two types- *Comitative* and *Additive*.

• The Comitative involves two entities occurring together while the accompanying element may be even a process. It is expressed by prepositional phrases with prepositions such as 'with' or 'without'. For example,

> She invited Richard's sons to stay <u>with her</u> (Lessing, 1999, p. 618). (Accompaniment-Comitative)

• In case of Additive, out of the two entities, one is represented circumstantially for the purpose of contrast and it is expressed by prepositional phrases with prepositions such as 'besides', 'instead of' etc. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 273). For example,

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And <u>instead of feeling angry, or contemptuous</u>, she knew she was looking self-conscious (Lessing, 1999, p. 372). (Accompaniment-Additive)

vi)   **Role**

This circumstantial element construes the meanings 'be' and 'become'. *Role* includes the subcategories of *Guise* ('be') and *Product* ('become').

• Guise corresponds to the interrogative 'what as?' and construes the meaning of 'be' in the form of a circumstance; the usual preposition is 'as'. The other complex prepositions with this function are 'by way of', 'in the role of', etc. For example,

The incident had been served up <u>as party fare</u>… (Lessing, 1999, p. 169). (Role-Guise)

• Product corresponds to the interrogative 'what into?' For example,

At the sight of my tears his voice changed <u>into a triumphant tenderness</u>,.. (Lessing, 1999, p. 558). (Role-Product)

vii)   **Matter**

Matter is generally related to verbal and mental processes (especially of the cognitive subtype). In case of verbal clauses, it is the circumstantial equivalent of the Verbiage, something which is described, referred to, narrated etc. The interrogative probe for it is 'what about?' It is expressed by prepositions such as 'about', 'concerning', 'with reference to' etc. For example,

They never cease complaining <u>about their unhappy lot</u>…(Lessing, 2012, p. 76). (Circumstance-Matter)

In case of mental processes, if a prepositional phrase follows a mental process, it acquires the role of the Phenomenon of the process. This prepositional phrase in the role of Phenomenon is called *Phenomenon-Matter* as it has features of both a circumstance and a participant. Due to their structural form, these prepositional phrases are considered circumstantial elements but unlike the circumstances they do not provide mere additional information about the process rather they are integral to the process like participants. See the example given below:

Anna learned <u>to stand up for herself</u> (Lessing, 1999, p. 9). (Phenomenon-Matter)

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In certain instances, Circumstance of Matter may also occur in case of other process types when such processes construe the sense of the verbal or mental process. Refer to the relational and behavioural clauses below:

> <u>To this</u>, Ella had no answer… (Lessing, 1999, p. 186). (Matter)
>
> <u>To each of these bits of information</u>… Paul Tanner nodded… (Lessing, 1999, p. 176). (Matter)

viii) **Angle**

The Circumstance of *Angle* is related either to the Sayer of the Verbal clause with the sense of 'as…. Says' or to the Senser of the mental clause with the sense of 'as… thinks'. It is called *Angle-Source* and *Angle-Viewpoint* respectively. It is often expressed by complex prepositions such as 'according to' or 'in the words of' (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 276). The examples of both types of Angle are given below:

> …<u>from him</u> had originated this concern for her, this belief in her essential innocence, this absolution from guilt (Lessing, 2012, p. 203). (Angle-Source)
>
> …but it sounded cruelly malicious <u>to Mary </u>(Lessing, 2012, p. 41). (Angle-Viewpoint)

Conclusion

This study is limited in its scope to examine only the transitivity system as an investigative tool to study experiential choices of a text. The study can be further enhanced by probing the ergativity system. Further, the study focuses only on the experiential meaning while the logical meaning has not been referred to whereas a complete picture of the representational meaning of the text involves the Logical exploration as well. Nonetheless, this study expects to contribute towards building up SFL literature for academic purposes of the students and scholars alike.

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