

Analyzing the Characterization in "A Tale of Two Cities" Using Transitivity System

تحليل التوصيف في "حكاية مدينتين" باستخدام نظام التعدي

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مستخلص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة تطبيق نظرية النحو الوظيفي و الباحث اختار عمل أدبي يدعى "قصة مدينتين" التي كتبت بواسطة تشارلز ديكنز. يهتم الباحث من خلال هذا البحث تحليل كيفية تمثيل التوصيف في القصة. يريد الباحث الكشف عن نوع شخصية سيد لوري باستخدام الوظيفة التصورية.

Abstract:

This study is based on the application of Systemic Functional Grammar Theory of the portrayal of the character Mr. Lorry in "A Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens. Through this research, the researcher is interested in analyzing how characterization is represented in the story .The researcher wants to reveal the type of character constructed on Mr. Lorry based on the transitivity system concerning ideational meaning analysis.

1. Introduction

Halliday develops J. F. Firth's theory in his General Theory of Language in Context. Halliday's theory is a combination of the structures of syntax and semantics. He displays the close relationship between structure and meaning within the sentence. We can analyze a sentence in two ways: firstly, according to the semantic structure, it consists of an actor, a process, and a goal, secondly, according to syntactic structure it splits into a subject, the main verb, and an object. So, syntax and semantics help people communicate and express their thoughts and feelings, which is what Halliday tries to assert in his theory.

Systemic Functional Grammar Theory is unlike other theories that deal with language as a mental process; it is concerned with the relationships between language, society, and text. It sheds light on the function of language and the discourses which are produced rather than its structure. It aims at displaying the internal relations in language and showing that language is a means of social interaction. Halliday mentions that all kinds of situational contexts can be explored by field, tenor, and mode and that each one of them represents one meta-function. Halliday (2000) classified language into three semantic constituents: ideational (experiential, logical), interpersonal, and textual. These three meta-functions clarify how people get experiences and represent ideas of the world, how they communicate and interact with each other, and finally how their experiences, interactions, and environments are reflected in their verbal and non-verbal interactions.

Halliday (2014, p. 33) defines the field as "what's going on in the situation: the nature of the social and semiotic activity; and the domain of experience this activity relates to (the 'subject matter' or 'topic')." Additionally, he describes the tenor as "who is taking part in the situation: the roles played by those taking part in the socio-semiotic activity and the values that the interactants imbue the domain with (either neutral or loaded, positively or negatively)." He also believes that the mode is "what role is being played by language and other semiotic systems in the situation: (1) the division of labour between semiotic activities and social ones (ranging from semiotic activities as constitutive of the situation to semiotic activities as facilitating); (2) the division of labour between

linguistic activities and other semiotic activities; (3) rhetorical mode: the orientation of the text towards field (e.g. informative, didactic, explanatory, explicatory) or tenor (e.g. persuasive, exhortatory, hortatory, polemic); (4) turn: dialogic or monologic; (5) medium: written or spoken; (6) channel: phonic or graphic."

2. Theoretical Framework

Part two displays the theoretical framework of the current study. It starts with a general overview of the origin and development of systemic functional grammar theory. Further, it displays theory fundamentals and its dimensions such as the various types of meta-functions, their uses, and functions.

2.1. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar Theory

As said before Systemic Functional Grammar Theory is one of the important pragmatic theories because it puts the foundations of discourse analysis as it links between language and society and helps the participants to create an effective speech/text. Halliday supposes that any language consists of three components: tenor, field, and mode. Every component of them is represented by a meta-function, for example, the field is represented by the ideational meta-function, the tenor is represented by the experiential meta-function, and the mode is represented by the textual meta-function.

2.1.1. Meta-function

People usually do not differ between function and meta-function. The function is defined as what something does or is used for. Unlike function, meta-function is more abstract than function. Schally and Zaefferer (2007) describe meta-function as a particular

mode, facet, or layer of meaning. For instance, Halliday uses meta-function to examine the internal function of language not only its use.

2.1.1.1. Ideational Meta-function:

The ideational function is the first function that is pointed out in System Functional Grammar Theory, and which represents human experiences of phenomena of the world. Halliday (1971:332) notes that those experiences cover both human experiences of the internal world of their consciousness such as their perceptions, reactions, and cognitions, and their linguistic acts of speaking and understanding. Eggins (1994) also defines it as what we use to express our experience in language. In other words, this meta-function reflects the events and experiences in both objective and subjective worlds and assists the writer\speaker to convey new information which is unknown to the reader\hearer.

In addition, Zhuanglin (1988:312) adds that ideational meta-function specifies the available options in meaning and determines the nature of their structural realizations. He mentions that Halliday chooses the transitivity system in grammar to represent the ideational meta-function and clause to be the unit that shows what is being done, what is felt, what is happening, and what the state is. Accordingly, this means that the transitivity system is based on a description of process, participant, and circumstance which reflect our understanding of phenomena that come with our experience. For instance, the clause “*the lion caught the tourist*” can be analyzed as:

[**Actor**] The lion [**Pr: Material**] caught [**Goal**] the tourist.

(Halliday, 2014, p.226)

2.1.1.1.1. Transitivity System

The transitivity system is based on processes, participants, and circumstances. There are two modes of transitivity system: transitive and ergative and they are explained in detail in the following part. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) state that there are two models of transitivity systems: transitive and ergative. They add that the transitive model differentiates the various process types. Transitivity is a liner interpretation that is concerned with a goal (together with, perhaps, the analogous, functions of a target in a verbal process and phenomenon in a mental process of please type), systems that emphasize the distinction between participants (i.e., direct participants, actor, and goal) and circumstances (all other functions). In other words, a transitive model is based on both the actor and process.

1) Processes

Halliday (1985, p.101-2) argues that process refers to a verb or action semantically perceived such as *feeling, sensing, saying, doing, happening, behaving, and existing*. Halliday classifies the process into six categories: *material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential*. Subramanian (2008) believes that Systemic SFG is based on only three main processes: mental, material, and relational process. He adds that verbal, behavioral, and

existential processes are located at the three boundaries between the main processes.

A) Material Process

Firstly, the material process is one of the major types of processes in the transitivity system. Subramanian (2008) believes that the material process connects both outer experience and the external world. In addition, Zhaunglin (1988) defines material process as the process in which something is done; it is expressed by action verbs such as the verb *give*, the actor, and the goal of the action e.g. “*the kid kicks the ball very hard*”. In the previous example “*the kid*” is the actor (doer of the process), the type of process is “*material*”, “*the ball*” is the goal and the type of circumstance is “*manner*”.

[Actor] The kid **[Pr: Material]** kicks **[Goal]** the ball **[circumstance]** very hard.

B) Mental Process

Secondly, a mental process which Halliday (1994, p.117) determines as the one which expresses mental phenomena using verbs such the verbs that express *reaction* as “like”, others express *perception* as “see” as shown in the following example, and *cognition* as “belief”. In other words, it expresses people’s inner experiences and their senses of the real world. The participant in this process is not a real subject of doing but the feeling itself. There are two participants involved in this process: the *senser* (the conscious being who is involved in a mental process) and *phenomena* (which is thought or felt or seen by the conscious

senser) e.g. *Sara likes cats*. In this example the senser is *Sara*, the process is *mental*, and the word *cats* is the phenomenon.

[Senser] I [Pr: Mental] saw [**Phenomenon: Act**] **the operation taking place.**

(Eggins, 2004, 227)

C) Relational Process

Subramanian (2008) states that the relational process relates a fragment of experience to another. Zhuanglin (1988) demonstrates that it can be classified into two types: attributive and identifying. The first type expresses what attributes a specific object has or what kind it belongs to; for example, *the temperature is high*. The second one shows identical properties of two entities; for example, *Ahmed is a boy*, and *the boy is Ahmed*. Table (1) displays the types of relational processes.

Table (1): The Principal Categories of relational clause
(adapted from: Halliday, 2014, p. 265)

	(i) Attributive 'a is an attributive of x'	(ii) Identifying 'a is the identity of x'
(1) Intensive 'X is a'	Sara is wise	Sara is the leader
(2) Possessive 'x has a'	Peter has a piano	The piano is Peter's
(3) Circumstantial 'x is at a'	The fair is on Tuesday	Tomorrow is the 10th

D) Verbal Process

Fourthly, Zhuanglin (1988) defines the verbal process as the process of exchanging information and almost it contains verbs such as *say, tell, talk, praise, boast, or describe*. Subramanian (2008) mentions that the verbal process is on the borderline between both mental and relational processes. He adds that this process is a symbolic relationship constructed in human consciousness and enacted in the form of language.

[Sayer] Marry [Pr: Verbal] said [verbiage] "I am hungry".

E) Behavioral Process

The fifth process is the behavioral process that crosses the borderline between material and mental processes. It manifests the acting out of the physiological reactions (Halliday, 1994, pp.106–107). Zhuanglin (1988) adds that it refers to both psychological and phycological behavior such as *coughing, smiling, breathing, laughing, crying, staring, and dreaming, etc*. He mentions that this process has only participants who are often human. He believes that it is much like the mental process and that it is hard to distinguish it from the mental process that also has only one participant.

F) Existential Process

The last process is the existential process which refers to something that exists or happens. Forms like "there is " and " there was " are commonly used in this process for instance:

- There were other cars
- There was a pen

The word "there" which is used in the clauses above, is used instead of the subject of the clause because all English clauses

require a subject. Halliday (1994, p142) mentions that the existential process always contains the verb "be" or related verbs such as *occur, come, exist, happen, take place, etc.*

2) Participants

Eggs (1994) believes that participants refer to entities, which can be human or inhuman. They are directly involved in the process by doing, saying, or behaving something and they are realized by nominal groups. Moreover, Simpson (1993, p.88) illustrates that each type of the six processes is associated with a specific set of participant roles, representing different phenomena in the semantic system of the clauses. In addition, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) believe that participants consist of actors and goals. Table (2) shows participants that are involved in processes according to their type. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014, p.334) define the actor as "The actor is construed as bringing about the unfolding of the Process through time; and this unfolding is either confined in its outcome to the Actor or extended to another participant, the Goal". Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) state that the actor functions as a representation in the construction of the clause and it is the active participant in the process, it may be the speaker or the doer of something. There are two types of actors. The first type is called *transitive actors* which are all 'beings' as the God or a human, and the second type is the *intransitive actor* which includes animals, one kind of artifact (the ark), and various types of natural phenomena.

Table (2): participants types.

Process type	Core meaning	participants
Material	“Doing”, “Happening”	Actor, Goal
Mental	“Sensing”	Sensor, phenomenon
Relational	“Being”	
Verbal	“Saying”	Sayer, Receiver, Verbiage
Behavioral	“Behaving”	Behaver
Existential	“Existing”	Existent

(Adapted from Peng Pingping, 2007)

Ergative interpretation is divided into agent, process, and medium. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) mention that the medium is achieved when the movement of sending and spreading is actualized. They also add that the difference between “doing” and “happening” descends from a different principle from a transitive one of extension and impact. ‘Happening’ means that process actualization is represented as being self-engendered, but ‘doing’ means that process actualization is represented as being caused by a participant which is external to the combination of process and medium. This external cause is called ‘agent’. Table (3) shows an example of the difference between ‘happening’ and ‘doing’.

Table (3): the difference between happening and doing processes.

	Agent	Process	Medium	
doing	I'm	going to sent	A great flood	
happening			The great flood	spread
			Medium	process

(Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014)

3) Circumstances

Simpson (1993, p.88) & Eggins (1994, p. 12) mention that circumstances are associated with a process that is expressed by prepositional and adverbial groups. It expresses supplementary information such as *time, manner, means, cause, duration, etc.* Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p.314:328) divide circumstances into nine types:

- A) Extent
- B) Location
- C) Manner
- D) Cause
- E) Contingency
- F) Accompaniment
- G) Role
- H) Matter
- I) Angel

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) state that both extent and location circumstances are related to each other because they construe the unfolding process in space and time. They also form a four-term set as shown in table (4):

Table (4): Examples of extent and location

	Spatial	Temporal
Extent	Distance Walk (for) seven miles	Duration Stay (for) two hours. Frequency Knock three times
Location	Place Work in the kitchen	Time Get up at six o'clock

Extent shows the distance over the space that the process unfolds or the duration in time that the process takes. It can be measured by *hours, years, inches, miles*, and any standard unit of time and space. But location shows the place where the process takes place or the time when it happens. Temporal and spatial location can be either absolute or relative (near and remote). There is also a distinction between rest and motion, and within motion between motion towards and motion away from in both temporal and spatial locations. Extent and location have two types: definite and indefinite. Definite extent and definite location show the specific distance, duration, and frequency as “five miles, five years,

at home, at noon”, but indefinite extent and indefinite location display general temporal or spatial as “a long way, a long time, near and soon”.

Manner is different and it is divided into four subcategories: means, quality, comparison, and degree.

Table (5): Subcategories of manner

	Example
means	It seems that they traveled by train
quality	We know her well
comparison	Unlike his father, he is a hard worker
degree	We enjoyed it so much

On the other hand, the fourth category (degree) is divided into three types: reason, purpose, and behalf. It displays the reason why the process is actualized or the purpose of the process. Behalf is an expression that is used to refer to a specific person who is for his/her sake the process is undertaken.

Contingency circumstances have three subtypes: condition, concession, and default. Circumstantial conditions display the elements on which the actualization of the process depends. Circumstantial of Concession shows frustrated cause. They are

expressed by the prepositional phrases that start with the preposition *notwithstanding*, *despite*, *despite*, or *regardless of*. Default circumstantial are concerned with the negative condition and they usually start with the complex prepositions *in default of* and *in the absence of*.

Accompaniment circumstances are a system of combined participation in the process. It represents the meanings of 'and', 'not', 'or' as circumstantial. It is also expressed by prepositional phrases that start with prepositions like *with*, *without*, *instead of*, *and besides*. There are two subcategories of it: comitative and additive. Both have positive and negative aspects. Comitative starts with the preposition "*with*" if it is positive and with the prospection "*without*" if it is negative. But positive additive starts with a preposition like *as well as*, *besides*...etc. nevertheless, negative additive circumstances use different prepositions as "*instead of*."

Another type of circumstance is role. It analyzes the meaning of 'be' and 'become'. It is related to the value of the clause as an "intensive relational". This type consists of two subcategories: guise and product. Guise is used to analyze the meaning of "be" (attribute or identity). It is marked by the preposition *as* and other complex prepositions such as *by way of*, *in the role of*, *in the form of*...etc. The product corresponds to the interrogative What into? With the meaning of 'become' (attribute or identity). The *attribute* is a pattern that could be considered a type of role; however, it does not involve a prepositional phrase. It is added to the material process either as depictive, linking to the guise, or as resultative,

corresponding to the product. It appears as an adjective with a noun and usually, it comes with “*as*”: he comes back as a hero.

A further matter is related to the verbal process as it is the circumstantial which equals the Verbiage. Prepositions as *about*, *concerning*, *with reference to*, and *sometimes* simply to express the circumstances of the matter.

The last category of circumstances is *angel* which is related to either the ‘Sayer’ in the verbal process or the ‘senser’ of the mental process. Moreover, this type consists of two subtypes. The first type is ‘source’ because it displays the source information, and it usually contains the complex preposition *according to*. The other type is called ‘viewpoint’ because it shows the information which is given in the clause from someone’s point of view.

3. Research Question:

- 1- How do the ideational meta-functions of Systemic Functional Grammar Theory help the researcher to analyze the personality of the novel’s characters?

4. Data

The researcher selects the novel *A Tale of Two Cities* to be the data for the study. The novel is written by the well-known novelist Charles Dickens. Hotten (1870) says that Charles Dickens was born in 1812 in Portsmouth. He adds that Charles left the school at the age of 12 as his father was incarcerated in a debtor’s prison. Pollak, Belviso, and Geyer (2014) state that Dickens worked in a shoe polish factory when he was a child and that his tough life inspired him to create the most memorable characters in his novels. They add that he is known for his masterful storytelling

in books like *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Great Expectations*. They state that he is one of the greatest novelists of the Victorian era and that his works amuse and inspire both writers and readers.

A Tale of Two Cities sets in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution. The novel displays the events and conditions that led up to the French Revolution and the reign of terror between 1775–93. It was published first in London by Chapman & Hall in 1859. It is one of the bestselling novels of all time and it is adapted for film, television, radio, and stage.

A Tale of Two Cities discusses mainly the injustice of an aristocratic family called “Evremondee” as an example of the injustice of the aristocracy to the public at this time. It all starts with their injustice to Dr. Manette, who is secretly imprisoned for 18 years, leaving his wife and daughter Lucie, who know nothing about him until they think he is dead. Since then, a close friend of Dr. Manette, named Lorry, took his daughter to London to keep her away from the oppression of the aristocrats in France. When Lorry knows that his friend is released from prison, he goes to Lucie to confess to her the truth about her father. As soon as Lucie learns the truth, she is shocked, but she decides to bring her father back to life again.

5. Data Limitations

The researcher has analyzed the dialogues of all characters of the novel, but she prefers to concentrate on the important and effective characters just to narrow down the data collection to be controllable. So, this research focuses only on six characters: Sydney

Carton, Charles Darnay, Doctor Manette, Lucie Manette, Madame Defarge, and Jarvis Lorry.

6. Analysis and results

Table (6) Description of processes related to Mr. Lorry

Type of process	Total occurrence	Percentage
Material	275	40%
Relational	213	32%
Mental	130	19%
Verbal	44	6.5%
Existential	17	2.5%
Behavioral	0	0

Table (6) shows the percentages of processes used by Mr. Lorry. According to the writer's description of Mr. Lorry, he is a person who wears tidy clothes and cares about his appearance. The writer also shows that Mr. Lorry has a decent personality. Table (7) shows that Mr. Lorry's character is dominantly associated with material processes. Out of 685 clauses uttered by Mr. Lorry, 275 are material, which reflects the fact that his character is dominated by actions and doing rather than saying (verbal process utterances = 44)

The analysis shows that the relational process is in the second rank after material processes. It takes up 32 percent of the dataset, indicating that Mr. Lorry enjoys assigning things to their true nature and identity. Mental processes come in third position because they occupy 19% of the data. The verbal process is represented by 44 clauses, whereas the existential process is represented by only 17

clauses. On the other hand, Mr. Lorry does not state any clause that reflects a behavioral process.

A) Material process

The overwhelming value of material processes indicates that this character is dominated by actions. This also can be proved by many situations in the novel. For example, the actions of Mr. Lorry when he meets Lucie at the beginning of the novel show that he respects her and this is clear through his actions and manner by bowing, kissing, and leading her to the chair. The sample of analysis shows that below:

Material Process				
N	Actor	process	goal	Page number
1	I	Kiss	Your hand	p.25
2	you	Can bear	It?	p.29
3		Don't kneel		p.29

Previous clauses assure us that Mr. Lorry has a gentle personality and that he respects Lucie. The first clause consists of an actor "I" which refers to Mr. Lorry and a process "kiss" which is a dynamic verb and a goal "your hand". It shows how Mr. Lorry treats Lucie kindly. Similarly, the second clause demonstrates his care for her sentiments and concerns that she is not ready to know that her father is still alive. Furthermore, he attempts to assist her many times through his acts, especially after knowing the truth, as seen in the third example.

b) Relational Process

This process describes the inner and outer experiences of Mr. Lorry by drawing upon the relationship that exists between two isolated entities. Relational processes are frequently found after material processes in all clauses related to Mr. Lorry. It is found in 213 clauses. The relational processes are used to give attributes, identity, and possession of Mr. Lorry or the other characters. The following are examples of the relational processes which are said by Mr. Lorry to give attribute to Dr. Manette and himself:

Relational attributive					
N.	carrier	process	attribute	circumstance	Page number
1	He	was	a French gentleman a scientific gentleman; a man of great acquirement --a doctor.		p.27
2	I	was	one	of the trustees	p.27

As seen in the table above, relational attributive processes consist of a carrier as "he" and "I", a process which usually contains the verb to be, attribute, and sometimes a circumstance as in the second example. The first clause presents how Mr. Lorry gives positive attributes to Dr. Manette. He uses the relational attributive process to show the good qualities of Dr. Manette to his daughter Lucie. He also sometimes uses this process to talk about himself

positively as in the second example in which Mr. Lorry tells Lucie that he is one of her father's friends.

Furthermore, Mr. Lorry uses relational processes also to show the identity of the other characters or things as shown in example (1). Mr. Lorry also uses the relational process to show possession as shown in example (2).

Relational identifying				
N.	Token	process	value	Page number
1	It	Would seem	Like flight, my darling	p.378
Relational possessive				
2	possessor	process		Page number
	I	had	the honour of knowing him there	p.27

c) Mental Process

Mr. Lorry uses mental processes 130 times throughout the novel. The mental processes encode Mr. Lorry's feelings and thinking. Clauses that include mental processes construe inner experience and have a senser as an inherent participant role. The mental verbs such as "think" and "know" are used to represent the characterization of Mr. Lorry through cognition. Table (8) is an excerpt of the mental process.

Table (8):

Mental process					
N.	senser	process	phenomena	circumstance	Page number
1	I	hope	You care to live		p.18
2	You	know	the terms	upon which I have the honour and happiness to stand with the family.	p.156

Mr. Lorry in the first clause sees a ghost that embodies Dr. Manette. This shows Mr. Lorry's anxiety about his friend, and how he thinks most of the time of Dr. Manette especially when he was in jail. Mr. Lorry uses the verb "hope" 13 out of 130 and this shows that he is a person who looks forward to the future more than the past. In the second one, he expresses his feelings of happiness because he helps Dr. Manette's family to Stryver. In the second example, Mr. Lorry chooses the verb "know" which represents the mental process, and he uses this verb 44 times throughout the novel.

d) Verbal Process

The verbal process occupies the fourth position in Mr. Lorry's presentation. Throughout the whole novel, 44 clauses express verbal processes said by Mr. Lorry. He does not use this process many times and this proves that he is a man of actions more than a sayer. Verbal processes are realized by verbal groups such as *call, speak, talk, ask, and say* as shown in Table (9):

Table (9):

Verbal Process				
Sayer	process	receiver	verbiage	Page number
you	ask	me	for my advice, Mr. Stryver?	p.109
Jerry	say		that my answer was, RECALLED TO LIFE.	p.13

e) Existential & Behavioral Processes

The existential process is the least used compared to the previous processes. It refers to something that exists or happens. It realizes most of the time by verbs as “be” as in table (10):

Existential Process			
	process	existent	Page number
There	is	nobody to weep for me	p.328

In the previous clause, Mr. Lorry the uses verb “to be” and the word “there” to show that there is no one who cares about him. The data show that Mr. Lorry does not use any behavioral process, and this happens because he is not one of the main characters, so the writer does not focus on showing his behaviors through his use of language.

7. Conclusion

To sum up, the analysis of Mr. Lorry’s use of the components of the three meta-functions shows his real personality. His use of ideational meta-function shows his personality for being a caring, gentle, anxious, loyal, yet responsible person through his physical activities of helping both Lucie and Dr. Manette. It also shows that he is a man

of actions more than a sayer. Contrary to what he tries to show others that he is a practical person who does not have feelings, mental process assures that he sometimes likes to show his attitude, feeling, and thought.

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