

MODERNITY, SIMPLICITY AND BIOPHILIA IN A POEM: TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF THE POEM 'LEISURE'

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to analyze the transitivity patterns used in a poem 'Leisure'. The poem aimed to highlight the significance of nature in human's life and how modernity is detaching humans from the core essence of nature and its beauty. The objective of the study was to analyze the connection of man and his surroundings in a modern time. The study tool was transitivity analysis which was set by M.A.K. Halliday under Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). The outcomes of the study disclosed that transitivity analysis makes the thematic and underlying message clear and easy to understand.

1. Introduction and Theoretical framework:

Language is a medium of expression. It is used to convey a vast spectrum of thought, emotions and intentions. Halliday defines language as how people exchange meanings by language. Systemic functional linguistics is one of the prominent work by M.A.K Halliday which highlights that how language creates meaning and how it teaches us to be a part of the society. Language serves as a social tool which reduces the communication barriers between man and his environment. Fairclough (2003) focused on how language drives social change and how changes in language can indicate broader transformation in social practices and power relations. Language not only demonstrates social discourses but also creates them. This role of language is elucidated by SFL approach.

SFL basically centers on what language does and how it does. (Cunanan, 2011). SFL also focusses on role of language in social context and how it is affected by it. The semantic component of the SFL model is construed in terms of three

metafunctions. ideational, interpersonal and textual. Downing (2001) found that SFL framework can be used for effectively evaluating the quality of writing since this network describes the relationship between various elements that serves communicative events. For example, the ideational metafunction (relation between topic and writer), interpersonal metafunction (between reader and writer) and the textual metafunction (between writer and text). Downing also explained that these three metafunctions establish a thematic unity in the text.

Transitivity analysis is a sub-system of ideational metafunction and it focusses on the experiential meaning of the text. It also focusses on the structure of clauses and how they convey the meanings. It mainly consists of participants, processes and circumstances. The processes are mainly considered as the central part of the clause. Halliday (1994) explained six process types under transitivity, labelled as: Material, Mental, Relational, Verbal, Behavioral and

Existential. Material process describes an activity or doing done by actor. Mental process involves feeling, thinking, and perception

Behavioral Processes are processes of physiological and psychological behavior. Verbal processes show activities related to information. Specifically, the process includes that of saying, commanding, asking, and offering. Existential processes are processes of existence. These represent that something exists or happens. Relational process refers to a relation set up

between two entities. Halliday (1994) states that relational process is divided into two modes: identifying relational process and attributive relational process. In the identifying mode, something has an identity assigned to it. It means that one entity is being used to identify another: 'x is identified by a', or 'a serve to define the identity of x' (Halliday, 1994). Attributive relational processes are the processes which assign a quality. 'a is an attribute of x'. In this mode an entity has some quality attributed to it (Halliday, 1994).

Examples of different processes along with participants adopted from J.R Firth analysis is as follows:

Processes	Participants
Material	Actor, Goal, Scope, Attribute, Client, Recipient
Mental	Senser, Phenomenon
Verbal	Verbal Sayer, Receiver, Verbiage
Existential	Existent
Relational	Carrier/Attribute, Token/Value
Behavioural	Behavior, Behavior

Table 1. Examples of different process types adapted from Nguyen (2012)

Process Type	Examples
Material	I do my exercise near the lake
Behavioural	I smile at them
Mental	I do not understand
Verbal	They say, I have acted crazy all my life
Relational	I am a kindly grandmother
Existential	Today there's Christianity in the south.

Significance of the study: The study basically highlights the transitivity pattern followed in the poem "The Leisure". Including the processes, participants and circumstances. The study aims to identify the significance of transitivity processes in teaching learning process. It also aims to inculcate the application and effectiveness of transitivity patterns for understanding the poem "Leisure" by learners. Also, the interpretation of the poem highlights the detachment of the man from his environment. Study also highlights how modern man is losing the aesthetic sense.

Research question:

How transitivity analysis helps in showing the connection between modern man and nature?

2. Methodology:

The study is a deep textual analysis of the selected poem to uncover the hidden themes which are portraying the true picture of a modern man. The selected text for the study is a celebrated poem of W.H. Davies' "Leisure". The tool used in the study was transitivity analysis which makes up the ideational metafunction under M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. Firstly, the poem is split into clauses; clause is the unit of analysis in SFG. The clauses are numbered according to the order they've occurred in the text (see Appendix B) so that they can be easily referred to in the analysis. Secondly, "participants" and

“processes” are categorized in each clause (see Appendix C). The circumstantial elements are also catered as it plays an important role in referring towards the modern man. The types of processes have also been highlighted. The data has been interpreted and discussed qualitatively.

3. Data Analysis

Nature is a fundamental and crucial part of humankind. In fact it is the greatest blessing for all the living beings. There is a great motivation in nature for a number of writers, poets and artists that they create stories and poems in order to glorify nature. Unfortunately, nowadays human has failed to understand the importance of nature as portrayed by William H. Davies in

the poem 'Leisure'. The poet has delivered the notion of man's detachment from the environment or natural world. The poem carries the impression that modern man is loosing his aesthetic sense. He has no time to appreciate the tranquility and elegance of the natural world.

The current analysis aims to highlight the disconnection of man from his environment. To achieve the goal, the processes, participants as well as circumstances have been taken into account. If we look at the wider picture of the poem then it revealed that major processes were Material= 7, Relational= 5 and Mental= 2. While the other processes Verbal, Behavioural and Existential are not used.

Table 2. Total count of processes

Process Type	Count
Material	7
Relational	5
Mental	2
Verbal	0
Behavioral	0
Existential	0

As the objective of the poem is to analyse the isolation of man from his environment and that modern man is loosing the aesthetic sense, so the processes and circumstances have been considered in relation to the participants carrying them out.

The use of relational processes in clauses 1, 2, 13 and 14(is, have) shows the relationship of modern life and nature. The poet says that what is the purpose of this life if we (human beings) have no time to enjoy it's beauty. Our life is full of worries that we can't even enjoy the beauty spread around us. The poet called such life a very poor and miserable one. Secondly, the use of mental process in clauses 3, 4, 6, 9,10,11,12, (to stand, stare, hide, to turn, watch, to wait, enrich) also highlight the busy and compact modern life. The poet says that we as human being are so engage in our daily routines that we have no time to stand beneath the bough and stare that for how long the sheep and cows stays there. We have no time to see the place where squirrels hide

their nuts in grass. The use of mental process also highlight that man is loosing his aesthetic sense. The clause (no time to turn at beauty's glance and watch her beautiful feet how they can dance) shows that man is even not interested in such a beautiful lady who is dancing and moving her feet in a beautiful manner. He doesn't have time to wait for her beautiful smile that has been depicting through her eyes.

The use of circumstantial elements in clause 2, 3, 4, 5,6,7,8, 9,10,11,12, 13,14(to stand and stare, beneath the boughs, as long as sheep and cows, when woods we pass, in grass, in broad daylight, like skies at night, at beauty's glance, how they can dance, till her mouth can, her eyes began, full of care, to stand and stare) strongly conveys the idea of man's disconnection from the beautiful nature and a proof that he is loosing his aesthetic sense.

4. Findings and conclusions:

The most popular framework within Halliday's SFL is transitivity analysis. It has proved to have great role in text and discourse analysis. It provides a great insight to the readers about the text. It portrays a clear picture of "who/what does to whom/what?" thus, to have a better understanding of the text.

To conclude, Transitivity analysis demonstrates that the use of material, Relational and mental processes in the poem suggest that modern man is so involved in his fast-paced life to stand, look or listen which leads him towards the emotional and physical withdrawal from the green world.

5. Recommendations:

➤ The study further recommends that these transitivity pattern in poem can be used in pedagogy by educators.

➤ Various participants and processes in the poem makes it more easily understandable for the learners.

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