

TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF *THE PROBING EYES* BY NWACHUKWU-AGBADA

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Abstract

This study uses Halliday's transitivity system to analyse the processes, participants and circumstances in *The Probing Eyes* written by Nwachukwu-Agbada. Transitivity system considers language as representation of human experiences of the world or reality. From the analysis, the study explores characters in a text use language to represent the world inside human beings as well as the world around them. The findings show that material processes has the highest percentage of occurrence with (35.56%), to demonstrate that the actors are active participants acting out their world of experiences of what goes in and out of them. Mental process comes second with (31.11%); relational processes (13.33%); behavioral processes (8.89%); verbal processes (8.89%) and lastly is the existential process with (2.22%). Material process expresses actions and reactions of the participants. Based on the analysis of the transitivity process, participant and circumstance of the story through the direct method (showing), the result shows that the author does not merely convey the characters based on what appears through the behavior of the characters but also penetrates the thoughts, feelings, turmoil and inner conflict as well as the motivation that underlies the behavior of the characters.

Keywords: Transitivity, Processes, Participants, Circumstance

Introduction

Many researches have been carried out in Nwachukwu-Agbada's works such as, Psychological, Psychopathological analyses and relevance of his stories in contemporary times. None has tried to look into his works from transitivity point of view. This informs the basic interest of this study; to look into Nwachukwu-Agbada's short story, *The Probing Eyes*, from the transitivity aspect using Halliday's transitivity theory as a theoretical framework to analyze the processes, participants and circumstances found in the clauses that will be selected from the story under study. Transitivity analysis has been used to understand the language of writers and speakers, examining in depth, the structure of sentences which expresses semantic processes, participant's involvement and circumstances in which the participants are involved. In his *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday's concern is not whether a verb takes or does not take a direct object but his preoccupation is in what he calls "transitivity process" which involves the process itself, participants in the process and circumstances associated with the process (Halliday, 1981:172). This he divides into six process types namely: material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal and existential. These process types align with the metafunctions of language in his clause definition as "The simultaneous realization of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings.

Semantically, experiential meaning and the assignment of processes offers a model of the speaker's experience and serves to represent this experience by construing configuration of a process, participants involved in it and any attendant circumstances" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 169). These configurations are organized syntactically through the transitivity

system. Analyzing metafunctions in a text may help people understand the information contained in a literary work, especially how the information develops. Transitivity theory is applied by scholars to explain the experiential choices an author/ speaker makes to create a certain meaning to express his/ her message. This article therefore, adopts Halliday's model as the theoretical framework to analyse the transitivity processes, participants and circumstances in "The Probing Eyes" in "Love Strokes and Other Stories" by Nwachukwu-Agbada (1998), to find out if there are clauses in the story that show transitivity processes, participants and circumstances.

Transitivity System

Thompson (1996:78) stated that transitivity refers to a system for describing the whole clause, rather than just the verb and its object. It describes how meaning is carried across from subject to predicate through the verb (Hancock, 2005:91). It may also help to think about verb phrases as determining kinds of representational processes (Hicks, 2007: 20). Halliday stated that a clause construes the world of experiences and consisting of nuclear processes, participants, and circumstances (Martin, 1992:10). The concepts of process, participant and circumstance are semantic categories which explain in the most general way how phenomena of the real world are represented as linguistic structures (Halliday, 1994:109). Processes are expressed by verbal groups, participants by nominal groups, and circumstances by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases. In Halliday's Transitivity Model, there are six process types: material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential. Material, mental and relational are the major categories, while verbal, behavioral and existential are the minor processes group.

Table Showing transitivity processes and their phrase classes.

Process Type	Category Meaning	Participants
Material	"doing"	Actor, Goal
Action	'doing'	
Behavioral	"behaving"	Behaver
Mental	"sensing"	Senser
Perception	"seeing"	Phenomenon
Affection	"feeling"	
Verbal	"saying"	Sayer, Target
Relational	"being"	Token, Value
Attribution	"attributing"	Carrier, Attribute
Existential	"existing"	Existent

(Halliday, 1985:131)

Processes

Processes are central to transitivity. The process centers on that part of the clause that is realized by the verbal group, but it can also be regarded as what 'goings-on' as represented in the whole clause (Bloor and Bloor, 1995:110). There are indeed six different process types identified in Halliday's model: material, behavioural, mental, verbal, relational, and existential.

Material Processes (Processes of doing and Happening)

Material processes are processes of doing and happening. Semantically, material processes indicate activities or events which happen in the outside world of human beings (Saragih, 2010:7). There are two varieties of this type of processes; "Doing to" or dispositive type and "bringing about" or creative type. Material process expresses that an entity "does" something, which may be done "to" an actor, who carries out the action, and some processes, but not all have a second participant called goal, which implies "directed at" or "the one to which the

process is extended” (Downing, 2006:134). They express the notion that some entity physically does something, undertakes some action. One identification criterion for material processes is that they can be explored by asking: ‘*what did x do?*’: *what did John do? John repaired the car.*

Mental Process: (Processes of sensing)

Mental processes are processes of “sensing”. This process of sensing may be construed as flowing from a person’s consciousness (Halliday, 1985:170). Mental processes differ from material ones and therefore they require a different functional interpretation. Mental processes may be of four sub-types; perception, which refers to processes of feelings, seeing and so forth; cognition, which refers to processes of thinking, knowing, etc; emotion or affection, refers to processes of liking, hating etc; desideration which refers to processes of wanting, and so forth. In a mental process, there is always a conscious participant, “the senser”, also called “experiencer”, who perceives, knows and so forth, and a second participant, “the phenomenon”, that which is perceived, known or liked (Downing, 2006:133). Mental processes express mental reactions and give insight into people’s consciousness and how they sense the experience of the reality (134). It refers to the perception senses like seeing and hearing. Perceptive process is marked by verbs such as “see” and “hear”. The second type is cognitive process which refers to the process of thinking. These verbs; like, think, recognize, and “consider” belong to cognitive mental process. Affective mental process signals the process of “liking” or “hating”. The verbs in this category are “admire”, “love”, “hate”, or “dislike”. Desiderative, which is the last, is also called volition, which shows the senser’s expectation. ‘Want’ and “wish” are such verbs that mark this process (Halliday, 1970:160). Hence, the reason for using mental processes are as spring to take a leap on the transitivity analysis of the main character in the short story is that the narrator uses mental verbs mostly in his narration to depict the mental tortures of love relationship amongst the participants in the texts. The realization of mental verbs is necessarily to observe different intentions on why certain type of mental verb is chosen. By doing so, the comprehension and interpretation of the character can be more objective as it relies on hard data and careful analysis.

Verbal Processes (Saying and Communicating)

Verbal processes are processes of saying and communication realized by verbs such as say, talk, asked, etc (Downing, 2006:134). Eggins (1994:215) states that a verbal process typically contains three participants: *sayer*, *receiver* and *verbiage*. The *sayer*, the participant responsible for the verbal process, does not have to be a conscious participant (although it typically is), but anything capable of putting out a signal. The *receiver* is the one to whom the verbal process is directed; the beneficiary of a verbal message, occurring with or without a preposition depending on position in the clause. The *verbiage* is a nominalized statement of the verbal process; a noun expressing some kind of verbal behavior. Many verbal processes occur with a nominal element, and a *verbiage*(Halliday,1985:129).

Behavioural processes (Psychological and Physiological behaviour processes)

Behavioural Processes are processes of physiological and psychological behaviours, like breathing, dreaming, snoring, smiling, hiccupping, looking, watching, listening, and pondering (Gerrot and Wignell, 1994:60). Grammatically, they are situated between material and mental processes. The majority of these processes usually hand only one called behavior, who is typically a conscious being, and a Range which is often a cognate (Halliday, 1985:137). Examples according to Halliday (1985:136) are: (1). (near mental) processes of consciousness presented as forms of behaviour, look watch, listen, think, dream and so on.(2). (near verbal) verbal processes as forms of behaviour chatter, talk, murmur, and so on.(3). (Physiological

processes manifesting states of consciousness, laugh, smile, whine, mood and so on. (4). Other physiological processes – breathe, sneeze, bump and so on. (5). (near material) bodily postures and pasteurizing, dance, lie (down) etc

Relational Process (being and having)

Relational processes are in a wide sense, processes of being. Halliday (1985:112) argues that relational processes are those of being; for example, *Sarah is wise, Tom is the leader*. The central meaning of clauses of this type is that something is. Every language accommodates, in its grammar, a number of distinct ways of being, expressed as different types of relational process in the clause. Nevertheless, there are many types of being which will be expressed as different types of relational processes in the clause. Those which the author identifies are the following (Halliday, 1985:116): (1) Intensive “X is A” and (2) Circumstantial “X is at A. (3) Possessive “X has A”. Each of these types comes in two modes: (a). Attribute, “A in an attribute of ‘X’. (b). Identifying “A is the identity of ‘X’ and the identified (Halliday, 1976:114).

Existential processes

Existential processes are those processes which represent that something happens or exists. They are usually realized by the verb “there + to be or some other verb which expresses existence for example; exist or arise, and they are followed by a nominal group which functions as an existent which is often an event, but can be a phenomenon of any type. Oftentimes, an existential process contains a circumstantial element as in, “there was a picture on the wall”. It is frequent in a non- finite clause, as in “there’s a patient to see you (Halliday, 1985:130). These processes represent that something exists or happens. These clauses typically have the verb “be”, or some other verb expressing existence, such as exist, arise, followed by a nominal group functioning as existent (a thing which exists in the process).

Participants

Participants are typically realized by nominal groups. Each process has special sort of participants. It means, by knowing the participants we can also know the types of processes and circumstances. The type of participant is determined by the process involved. Each of these processes has its own participants. Participants are discussed according to the various processes and the type of action they perform in the processes. The basic principle is that participants are realized by nominal groups and circumstances are realized by prepositional phrases of adverbial groups. Participants are attached to every process (Egins, 1994). However, the basic principle may be departed from under certain conditions: a) Participants that are marked theme or late news in the clause are marked by a preposition: **Agent** (in a receptive ['passive'] clause): by (sometimes with). **Medium** (in a receptive clause): by, **Recipient**: to, **Client**: for, **Range**: at, up, over, **Actor** (doer of the action), **Goal** (Object of the action) **Carrier, Attribute** (Goal after the process has been completed), **Token** (participant which is identified) **Value** (something which is given to the identified participant), **Sayer** (refers to speaker or anything that become the source of saying), **Senser** (the one that sense), **Behaver, Existent, Verbiage** (signal something that is said), **Addressee, Receiver** (indicate addressee to whom the saying is delivery), **Phenomenon** (something which is sensed by the senser) Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014) **and Target** (show entity or event which is being said or exist. (Gerrot and Wignell, 1994:86). (b) Participants in relational clauses may be adverbial groups as well as prepositional phrases: (identifying:) on the twelfth. (c) Participants can serve as Subject, but Circumstances cannot. (d) Participants are interrogated by means of who, what, which; circumstances by means of when, where, why, how (plus prepositional phrases such as withwhom/ who ... with, since when/ since ... when, for whom/ who ... for) (Lock, 1996:165).

Table Showing Halliday's Transitivity Participants in the Processes

Material	Mental	Relational	Verbal	Behavioral	Existential
Actor	Senser	Carrier	Sayer	Behaver	Existent
Goal	Phenomenon	Attribute	Receiver	Behavior	
Beneficiary/ Recipient		Attributor	Verbiage		
Beneficiary (Client)		Identifier	Target		
Scope Initiator		Identified			
		Assigner			

(Halliday, 1985:131)

Lock (1996:165) states that the basic principles of participants are realized by nominal groups. For instance, "*we had breakfast with Tiffany in the afternoon*". The participant is *we* (actor), *breakfast* (range); and the circumstance is *with Tiffany* (accompaniment), *in the afternoon* (locative-time). The basic differences between participant and circumstance may be departed from under certain conditions: (a) Participants that are marked theme or late news in the clause are marked by a preposition: (1) Agent (in a receptive (passive) clause): by (sometimes with); (2) Medium (in a receptive clause): by (3) Recipient: to (4) Client: for (5) Range: at, up, over. For instance: *he jumped the fence: he jumped clumsily over the fence; he baked her cake: he baked cake for her; she gave him the book: she gave the book to him; she played tennis with him: she played him at tennis*. Participants in relational clauses may be adverbial groups as well as prepositional phrases: (identifying :) *on the twelfth* (c). Participants can serve as subject, but circumstances cannot. For instance, *she drove here there by car, he was driven there by car*; but not *car was driven there by, there was driven by car*. The attribute of a relational clause cannot serve as Subject (it is not a prototypical participant in any case). Participants are interrogated by means of *who, what, which*; circumstances by means of *when, where, why, how* (plus prepositional phrases such as *with whom/ who ... with, since when/ since ... when, for whom/ who ... for*). **Actor** is the participant which is doer or performer of an action in a material process. **Goal** is the participant which is affected by the actor in the process. Goal is constructed by the process involvement of the actor. **Scope** is the participant which is unaffected from actor in the process. It is not constructed by the process directly. **Beneficiary-recipient** - the participant "to whom" the process takes place. The participant who gets advantage from the goods and services is known as beneficiary/recipient (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 224-244). In the clause, "John" and "the car", John is the actor while the car is the goal (Eggs, 1994:217). The two participants in the mental process are senser and phenomenon. A senser is the conscious being involved in the process, while a phenomenon is the participant which has felt, thought, or seen by the senser. **Senser** is the central and inherent participant in mental process. It may be one person or human collective. Senser is the participant who perceives, thinks, feels or wants in mental process. **Phenomenon** is also inherent participant like senser in mental process. Phenomenon is the act, thing or fact which is perceived, felt or wanted. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014:245-258)

The Carrier is the participant who carries an attribute or the entity which is ascribed or assigned with attribute in the process. **Attribute** is the entity or attribute (quality) which is assigned or ascribed to carrier. **Attributor** is the participant in relational process who assigns the quality (attribute). It is also known as assigner in relational process. **Identified** is the participant in relational process who is indicated by an entity in identification process. It is also known as Token in relational process. **Identifier** is the participant which identified the Token.

It is also known as the Value in relational process.(Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014:259-299). **The Sayer** is the participant who speaks or says in the verbal process. It is also known as the speaker of the process.**Receiver** is the also oblique. Receiver is the participant in verbal process to whom saying is directed.**Target** is the participant which is targeted by verbal process. Subtypes of clauses in verbal process contains target participant.

Verbiage is very important participant in verbal process. “What is said by sayer?”(Halliday, 1971:115). “The participant who carries out the role of the sayer is the “notice”. The participants of the processes are: sayer (participant who speaks), receiver (the one to whom the verbalization is addressed), verbiage (a name for the verbalization itself). In behavioral process, there is only one participant, namely; behavior (the agent who behaves).**Behaviour** is the participant which is affected by the process with the involvement of behavior (Halliday & Matthiessen, 201:301-302). There is only one participant in this process that is **Existent**. It is the entity or event which comes into existence as the process unfolds.

Circumstances

Circumstances answer such questions as when, where, why, how, how many, and as what. The principal types of circumstances are time (temporal), place (spatial), manner (means, quality, and comparison), cause (reason, purpose, and behalf), accompaniment, matter, and role (Gerrott and Wignell, 1994:52-53). In addition, Halliday (1985:137) suggests that the principal types of circumstantial element in English are as follows: extent and location in time and space, including abstract space: manner (means, quality, and comparison): cause (reason, purpose, and behalf); accompaniment: matter; role, extent and location. Circumstances give extra detail about the physical action and inner world in which the human experiences are constructed. Circumstantial Elements in Transitivity System Circumstances (**Expansion: enhancing**), **Extent:** (Distance, Distance in space), **Duration:** (Duration in time), **Frequency:** (How many times?), **Location:**(Place-Where?), **Spatial:** (Time-When? Temporal), **Manner:** (Means-How? By which means?), **Quality:** (How? Adverbial group), **Comparison:** (Similarity and differences), **Degree:** (Prepositional phrase, How much? Adverbial group), **Cause:**(Reason Why? Causes, because Purpose What for? Intention Behalf Who for? On whose behalf action takes place, **Contingency:** (Condition, Why? Having sense of ‘if ’Default Having sense of negative condition Concession Frustrated cause, with prepositions).

Table Showing Circumstances in Halliday’s Transitivity System.

Category	Sub-Category	Sub-Type	Probe	Example
	Extent	Distance	How far?	over 10 miles
		Duration	How long?	for several days
		Frequency	How many times?	20 times
	Location	Place	Where?	In Tulsa
		Time	When?	In May
	Manner	Means	How?	By Train
		Quality	In what way?	This way
		Comparison	What like?	His hair was cut differently
		Degree	How much?	I like him so much
	Cause	Reason	Why?	because of

(Halliday, 1985:138)

Analysis

The method of data analysis employed in this paper is a purposive qualitative method. First and foremost, the clause in the stories were selected and analyzed based on Halliday's systemic processes. The texts were split into sentences and clauses. Each of the clauses was expressed in tables and examined to determine the process types of processes, the participants in the processes, and the circumstantial elements in the process. The selected clauses were thoroughly checked to enable the identification of the high occurring process, its participant and circumstance involved manually.

Clause 1. His heart gave a little lurch of excitement (TPE).

His heart	Gave	a little lurch of excitement
Participant	Process	Scope
Behaver	Behavioural	Behaved

Clause 2. Prospero could not have his way yesterday (TPE).

Prospero	could not have	His way	Yesterday
Participant	Process	Carrier	Circumstance
Actor	Material	Goal	Time

Clause 3. He felt like rushing her (TPE).

He	felt	like rushing her
Participant	Process	Scope
Senser	Mental	Phenomenon

Clause 4. Monday would have been away on morning duty (TPE).

Monday	would have been	away on morning duty
Participant	Process	Circumstance
Identified	Relational	Location

Clause 5. She has a penchant for a neat dress (TPE).

She	has	a penchant	for a neat dress
Participant	Process	Scope	Circumstance
Actor	Material	Goal	Manner

Clause 6. Suddenly Monday emerged from underneath the bed (TPE).

Suddenly	Monday	emerged	From underneath the bed
Circumstance	Participant	Process	Circumstance
Manner	Actor	Material	Place

Clause 7. Those Chadian beggars are sleeping on Lagos road (TPE).

Those Chadian beggars	are sleeping	On Lagos road
Participant	Process	Circumstance
Actor	Material	Place

Clause 8. Naomi would have been treating his eyes to such exposure (TPE).

Naomi	Would have been treating	his eyes	to such exposure
Participant	Process	Scope	Circumstance
Actor	Material	Goal	Place

Clause 9. All he knew was that he had arranged with Naomi to be at home by 10am (TPE).

All he knew	was	He	had arranged	With Naomi	To be home	By 10am
Adjunct	Process	Participant	Process	Scope	Circumstance	Circumstance
Modal	Relational	Identified	Relational	Identifier	Place	Time

Clause 10. Prospero's heart flowed over its brim with the joy of a conqueror (TPE).

Prospero's heart	flowed	over its brim	with the joy of a conqueror
Participant	Process	Circumstance	Circumstance
Actor	Material	Place	Manner

Discussions

Based on the results obtained, the most frequent type of process used in the short story is material process. It shows that the message of the short story is expressed through the actions and physical movements of the characters. The second process in the data is mental processes and relational processes. Relational process is applied in expressing the message through the way of being and having something. While, the mental process is applied in expressing the message through the process of feeling, thinking, perceiving. It is continued by verbal processes indicating the theme of love expressed through some utterances said by the participants. Material process expresses actions and reactions of the participants. Based on the analysis of the transitivity process, participant and circumstance of the stories through the direct method (showing), the result can be seen from above that the author does not merely convey the characters based on what appears through the behavior of the characters but also penetrates the thoughts, feelings, turmoil and inner conflict as well as the motivation that underlies the behavior of the characters.

The study examines the experiential meaning analysis using transitivity system in expressing the themes of the data expressed in the short story in detail. Focusing on identifying the processes, participants, and circumstances, the study will show the readers the way the narrator develop the themes of the short stories. It can be seen through two ways of transitivity processes, which are material process and mental process. Although there are 10 clauses, the analysis shows a total number of 45 transitivity processes that indicate the themes of the stories. The following table illustrates clearly the total amount of findings consisting of the number and percentage of each process type of transitivity system. From the analysis, 11 participants partook in the processes; 9 major participants and 2 minor participants.

Process types in *The Probing Eyes*.

Process	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Material	16	35.56%
Mental	14	31.11%
Behavioural	4	8.89%
Verbal	4	8.89%
Relational	6	13.33%
Existential	1	2.22%
Total	45	100

From the results obtained, the most frequent type of process used in the short stories is material process (35.56% and 16 processes). It shows that themes of the short stories are expressed through the actions and physical movements of the characters. The second processes used are mental (31.11% and 14 processes) and relational process (13.33% and 6 processes). Relational process is applied in expressing the theme through the way of being and having something. While, the mental process is applied in expressing the theme through the process of feeling, thinking, perceiving. It is continued by verbal process which has 4 processes (8.89%) indicating the themes are expressed through some utterances said by the characters. Behavioural process has 4 (8.89%) processes expressing the themes of the short stories. Lastly, existential has only

one slot (2.22% and 1 process). From the analysis, 11 participants partook in the processes; 9 major participants and 2 minor participants.

It might be argued that the clauses that imply the process of physiological or psychological behavior to express the themes are only 4 processes. Meanwhile, the writer found only 1 existential process which expresses the theme of the short stories. In other words, the clause expressing themes stated by the presence of something or some event is only one process.

Conclusion

In the process of representation, clause plays a central role, because it embodies a general principle of modeling experience, namely, the principle that reality is made up of Processes. Transitivity system, according to Halliday, is a set of grammatical system which construes the world of experience into a manageable set of Process Types (Halliday, 1994:106). There are six principle processes types in transitivity system: Material, Mental, Relational, Behavioural, Verbal, and Existential. Process types in transitivity system helps human beings recognize and encode their experiences or phenomena of the real world.

From the analysis of the processes, the dominant process is material processes with 16 clauses (35.56 %) of the total clauses of the text, showing that the participants are active actors in their experiences of the happenings around them. The second place is mental process with 14 clauses (31.11%), the third place is relational processes with 6 clauses (13.33%). Next is behavioral processes with 4 clauses (8.89%), verbal processes has the same number with behavioural processes clauses (8.89%). While existential processes comes last with only 1 clause (2.22%).

Analysis of data shows that the text yields 11 Participants: 9 major and 2 minor. These participants are distributed as 8 actors/goals, 1 existents, 3 carriers of certain attributes, 8 identified possessors of characteristics, 4 sayers or verbiages, 6 Sensors /phenomena, and 11 behavior. Specifically, the main participant, Prospero in "The Probing Eyes", is portrayed in the story as an "opportunist" lover, who wants to grab any opportunity to have a fast sexual relationship with another man's wife. Through this, the characters act out the world around them.

In Halliday's Functional Grammar System, language has three basic functions: ideational function, interpersonal function, and textual function. Each of them can be realized by one or more sets of grammatical system of language. The ideational function, Halliday mentions, concerns how human beings build a mental picture of reality with language, how they make sense of what goes on around them and inside them. Those goings-on consist of happening, doing, meaning, being and becoming.

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