

# TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS IN SHIRLEY JACKSON'S CHARLES

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## Abstract

*This study aims to investigate the process types used in Charles through transitivity analysis. This study uses the Transitivity theory proposed by Halliday (2014) to analyze the clause inside the story. The method used in this study is qualitative design to describe the process, how the meaning is realized, and what it represents according to the Transitivity theory. The source of data in this study is a short story by Shirley Jackson's Charles. From the result of the data analysis, there are five from six processes that are used in the short story. They are material process, mental process, relational process, verbal process, and behavioral process. These processes are found in 218 clauses. The result shows that the material process mostly represents Charles action in the kindergarten, the mental process mostly represent the mother's sense especially what she thinks about Charles in the story, the relational process mostly represents Charles bad quality and his identity as a bad person, the verbal process represents the exchange between characters and their opinion regarding Charles, and the behavioral process represents the manner of the action of saying.*

**Keywords:** *ideational Function; metafunction; transitivity analysis.*

## INTRODUCTION

In a literary work, the way an author constructs their world is entirely made of language, which is chosen specifically by "the authors using his imagination and the knowledge about the real world to produce a particular meaning and effect to the readers". (Halliday, 1978, p. 91). The language provides the author with a various choice of words to realize their intended meaning in their narrative to communicate with the reader. Thus, "choosing what to mean can be interpreted as choosing a path through various networks of system". (Halliday, 2013, p. 18). This choice is realized by the grammar in a text as the reference to what they mean. Thus understanding the grammar means understanding how the meaning is formed.

Under the Systemic Functional Grammar that proposed by Halliday (2014), from how the grammar form the meaning in a clause, language has three kinds of function, and one of them is ideational function where the language is seen for “representing the human ongoing experience” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 83). Thus this function is also called the experiential function.

In language is seen as representation, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) believed that “experience is consists of ongoing events, which is divided into several changes by grammar of the clause which is modeled as a figure” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 213). This figure consists of three elements, the participant, the process, and the circumstance. The participants are the ones who participate or do the process, the process is the experience that happen in the world, and the circumstances are referring to the participants’ situation. However, unlike the other two elements, circumstances are not a part of the process, these elements only contribute to it. “When a clause contains these elements, it called transitivity”. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 213)

There are six processes in transitivity proposed by Halliday (2014), and each process represents different experiences. The processes are mental process, material process, relational process, behavioral process, verbal process, and existential process. In transitivity, the experience is divided into an outer experience and an inner experience. Outer experience refers to the events and actions that happen outside the body, such as people performing some action and an occurring accident or event. As for the inner experience, it refers to the mental reaction to the ongoing event outside the body, such as the person feeling toward certain events, what the person thinks about the event or the person's reaction toward the event.

This study aims to investigate the process types found in the narrations and the dialogues in the short story. The researcher believes that each text has

a different process composition. Each of these processes is arranged like that in a particular order of discourse to convey the author intended meaning.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The writer uses the qualitative research method to describe the processes found in the narration and the dialogue in Shirley Jackson's *Charles*. According to Tayie (2005, p. 86), "qualitative studies attempt to produce a unique explanation about a given situation or individual". In line with this Berg (2001, p. 3) also states that "qualitative research refers to meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things". Thus, qualitative research is very appropriate for the study because it attempts to describe and give an explanation about the processes that are found in the short story *Charles*, how its meaning is realized, and what it represents in the story according to the transitivity theory proposed by Halliday (2014).

The part used to analyze the transitivity process is the clauses that appear in the narrations and dialogues where Charles and Laurie are discussed. These narrations and dialogues are collected from a short story titled *Charles* written by Shirley Jackson. This story is taken from a book titled *Shirley Jackson: Novels and Stories*, pages 73-77. This book is published on 27 May 2010 by Library of America.

The research instrument used in this study is the written text in the short story *Charles* by Shirley Jackson. This instrument is used because, according to Halliday and Hasan (as cited in Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014, p. 3) text can be described as "language functioning in context", and in line with this Halliday (2014, p 32) also states that "language is always theorized, described and analysed within an environment of meanings". This environment of meaning is referring to the context of the language, which in this case is referring to the story or the plot in *Charles* by Shirley Jackson. Thus, to analyze and describe the data, the written text in the short story *Charles* is used not only as the

instrument to gather the data but also as the instrument to assess and understand the data in this study.

## **FINDING**

The result of data analysis shows that from the six process types proposed by Halliday, there are only five process types that are found in the short story *Charles* by Shirley Jackson. Those processes are material process, mental process, relational process, verbal process, and behavioral process. These processes are found in 218 clauses, in which 81 of them are material process, 23 of them are mental process, 30 of them are relational process, 79 of them are verbal process, 5 of them are behavioral process, and none of them is an existential process or the existential process is not found in this story.

Process Type	Frequency of Occurrences
Material	81
Mental	23
Relational	30
Verbal	79
Behavioral	5
Existential	0
Total	218

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Material Process**

Material process is the process of doing something. This process represents the material action of an entity in its interaction with the material world. There are two participants in this process, the actor or the doer which is the one who performs the action, and the goal or the one who suffers the process or the action done by the actor.

This process occurs 81 times in the short story, and 30 of them are performed by Charles and represent his action. These actions mostly consist of transitive verbs which occur in 21 clauses. This means the material process

represents the action that Charles has done in the story, especially his action in the kindergarten and how these actions affect or extended to those around him. The clause below is one of the examples of material process found in the short story:

my son Laurie **started** kindergarten

(Data 1.1.1)

The process analysis of the process above is Actor-Process-Goal. There are two participants in the clause above, the actor 'my son Laurie' and the goal 'Kindergarten'. The actor is the doer or the entity that performs the action. Here 'my son Laurie' is shown for doing something. This something is represented by the verb 'started' which means began to performing an activity. This process is directed to the goal or the one who suffers the action in which is realized by 'kindergarten' which is referring to a school at the pre-school level.

### **Mental Process**

Mental process is the process of thinking, feeling, longing, and sensing. This process represents the mental action of an entity that reacted to the things that happen in the material world. There are two participants in this process, the senser or the one who sense or perform the mental action, and the phenomenon or the things that are being sensed by the senser.

This process occurs 23 times in the short story, and 10 of them are performed by the mother and represent her mental action. These mental actions are dominated by the cognitive process which occurs 7 times. Concerning the mother's role not only as of the character but also as the narrator inside the story means, what happens in the story is limited only to the things that the mother can sense. This process mostly represents what the mother thinks about Charles. Besides this, the mental process also represents the mother's feeling regarding the existence of Charles, her desire to know Charles more clearly, and what she perceives inside the story, especially in her

sense of hearing when listening to Laurie about Charles. The clause below is one of the examples of mental process found in the short story:

**I watched him**

(Data 1.2.3)

The process analysis of the process above is Senser-Process-Phenomenon. Here, the mother is seeing the time Laurie departed to the school for the first time. There are two participants in the clause above, the senser, the one who sense which realized by the pronoun 'I' and refers to the mother as the narrator of the story or the mother, and the phenomenon or the thing that is sensed by the senser which is realized by 'him' and refers to Laurie. The pronoun 'I' as the senser, in this clause is perceiving something with his sense. What the senser use to perceive the phenomenon is represented by the verb 'watched' which means seeing something carefully, the senser is using her eyes to perceive the phenomenon visually. The word watched is used rather than seeing in this clause means, the mother is focusing her attention on the phenomenon.

### **Relational Process**

Relational process is the process of characterizing and identifying. Characterizing means, describing the quality and attribute of a thing or an entity, while identifying means identifies or describing the identity of an entity. Therefore, this process has two modes, attributive, and identity. This process is also divided into three types, intensive, possessive, and circumstantial.

This process occurs 30 times in the short story. And 16 of them are describing Charles. These descriptions, mostly consist of attributive process, which describes Charles's attributes and qualities. These attributes and qualities are realized mostly by adjective words 'bad' and 'fresh' that tend to be negative in meaning. This means, the process represents the quality of Charles in the

story and emphasizes his identity as a bad person. The clauses below are the example of relational process found in the story:

It **was** Charles

(Data 2.3.24)

The process analysis of this process is Token-Process-Value, it means this is a relational process in identifying mode. In this process, Laurie is trying to identify the boy that is spanked by the teacher in the class, thus this boy which is referred to as 'it', becomes the token of this process. Here, the word 'Charles' which is a proper noun that shows the name of a person, acts as the value in this process. Thus, it can be interpreted that the value is related to the token as the name to refer the boy, and the name itself is cannot be shared with anyone, therefore it dominates the token which means this process is an intensive relational process.

He **was** fresh

(Data 3.3.24)

The process analysis of this process is Carrier-Process-Attribute, it means this is a relational process in Attributive mode. In this process, Laurie is trying to explain to his parents about the quality and the nature of the boy named Charles, thus the carrier who acts as the one who possesses the attribute and realized by the pronoun 'he' refers to Charles. In this process, the nature and the quality of Charles are revealed through the attribute which is realized by the adjective 'fresh' which means rude. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the attribute acts as the nature and the quality of the carrier or Charles in the short story. This quality dominates Charles's character, thus this process is also an intensive relational process.

## **Verbal Process**

Verbal process is the process of saying. This process represents the action of saying in the narrative whether as an activity or an exchange between the characters. There are three participants in this process, the sayer or the speaker who perform the verbal action, the receiver or the listener who is the addresser of the verbal action, and the verbiage or the content of what is said by the sayer.

This process occurs 79 times in the story, and 34 of them are performed by Laurie as the sayer. From the result of the analysis it found that this process mostly represented by the verbs say, tell, ask, remark, and demand where the verbiages are shown in the dialogue. This means, the verbal process mostly used as an exchange between the character in the story, and this exchange mostly initiated by Laurie as the main character in the story.

Concerning how the verbiage is dominated by the topic regarding 'Charles' in the verbal process which occurs 39 times, it means the exchange between the character mostly talks about Charles and their opinion regarding him. Especially their opinion regarding Charles' action that happens in the kindergarten and causing troubles for his teacher. The clauses below are some examples of verbal process found in the short story:

**"How was school today?" I asked**

(Data 3.4.14)

The process analysis of this process is Verbiage-Sayer-Process. Here, the mother asks Laurie about what had happened at the school. Thus, the mother is the sayer who initiates this process. The process in this clause is realized by the verb 'asked', thus it can be interpreted that the mother is trying to get particular information from Laurie by putting a question on him. From how the

verbiage is put on a quotation, it shows that this action is showing a dialogical exchange between the mother and Laurie.

### **Behavioral Process**

Behavioral process is the process that happens in both material word and mental world. It represents material action and mental action that manifesting physiological and psychological behavior through a single action. There is only one participant in this process, the behavior as the one who performs the behavior.

This process occurs 5 times, and 2 of them are performed by Laurie and the mother equally. The author uses this process to represent the behavioral feature in the action of saying or the characters' manner when performing the action of saying. Below is the example of this process found inside the short story:

He **grinned**

(Data 1.5.31)

The process analysis of this process is Behavior-Process. Here, Laurie is performing a behavioral action to show his feeling when he talks about Charles's deeds. Thus, the behavior that is realized by the pronoun 'he' is referring to Laurie. In this process, the behavioral action is realized by the verb 'grinned'. It implicates, Laurie ways of speaking with the feeling of joy and amusement in the story.

### **Conclusion**

From the analysis, it concluded that from the six process types proposed by Halliday (2014), there are only five processes that contribute to building the world in the short story *Charles* by Shirley Jackson. They are material process, mental process, relational process, verbal process, and

behavioral process. These processes occur 218 times in the story. The result shows that, the material process represent Charles action in the story and how it affects the others around him, the mental process represents what the mother thinks about Charles in the story, the relational process, represents the quality of Charles as bad and emphasize his identity as a bad person, the verbal process represent the exchange between the characters in the story which mostly talks about Charles and what did he do in the kindergarten, and the behavioral process represent the manner of the character when they say something.

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