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M.A.K Halliday's Transitivity-An Overview

Abstract: The paper is titled as 'M.A.K. Halliday's Transitivity - An Overview'. The aim of this paper is to understand the Transitivity and its elements. Transitivity is one of the clause analysis methods in linguistic. Transitivity system has been popular in analyzing literary texts. The framework used in discourse analysis is the 'Systemic Functional Grammar'. The concept is largely developed by Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday (often M.A.K. Halliday).

Halliday's Transitivity is a part of the Ideational function of language. Halliday has mentioned three Metafunction of language. Textual function, Interpersonal function, and Ideational function. There are three components in the Transitivity System. The process, participants, and circumstances. Halliday has divided process into six types of processes. Material, Mental, Relational, Behavioural, Verbal and Existential.

This paper includes the explanation of the process types of the Transitivity model and their sub classifications in addition to the participant and circumstances roles that are involved in the processes. The conclusion of the paper shows that the Transitivity system can analyze clauses effectively. It is useful for teachers, readers and, students to respond critically to the texts.

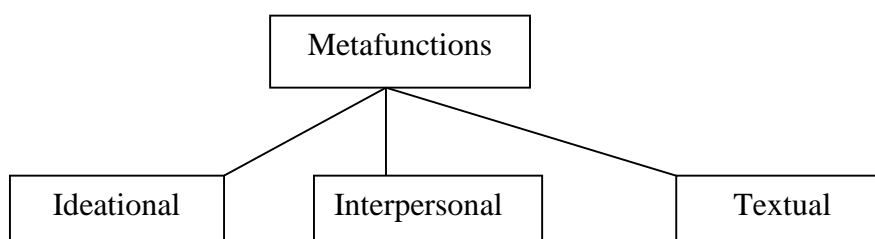
Key Words: Transitivity, Systemic Functional Grammar, Metafunction.

Background:-

The present paper attempts to explore the process of Transitivity System in M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. Halliday developed the Systemic Functional linguistic theory. It is a theory of language in context. It is known as Systemic Functional Grammar. Halliday's theory is about language, context and functional grammar. It maintains a point of view on language that is grounded in how the language is used to construe reality and enact social relationship. This theory claims that language is functional. Functional means that language, like other semiotic systems, is a systemic resource for making and exchanging meaning.

Systemic Functional Grammar is a functional model of language inspired by linguists such as Saussure, Hjelmslev, Whorf, and Firth. The theory as a general linguistics model of language was initially developed by M.A.K. Halliday and, his colleagues in London during 1960s. The theory is based on Firth's system structure theory. First (1935) developed Malinowski's concepts of the context of situation and context of culture. His works were developed by Halliday.

Systemic Functional Linguistics is a potent framework for describing and modeling language as a resource for making meaning and choices. This framework treats language beyond its formal structures and takes the context of culture and context of situation in language use. (Halliday 1985)¹. He suggested the major semiotic dimensions that organize the architecture of any language in context, structure, system, stratification, and metafunction. Metafunction is a term Halliday used to refer to the functions of language. Metafunctions of language consist of three major functional components.



The Metafunctions are groups of grammatical systems that produce meanings which can be seen as being mapped onto the structure of the clause. The concept of Metafunction is a set of principles which are necessary to explain how language works and it explains how meaning is expressed through language. Halliday's Metafunction figure shows detail description-

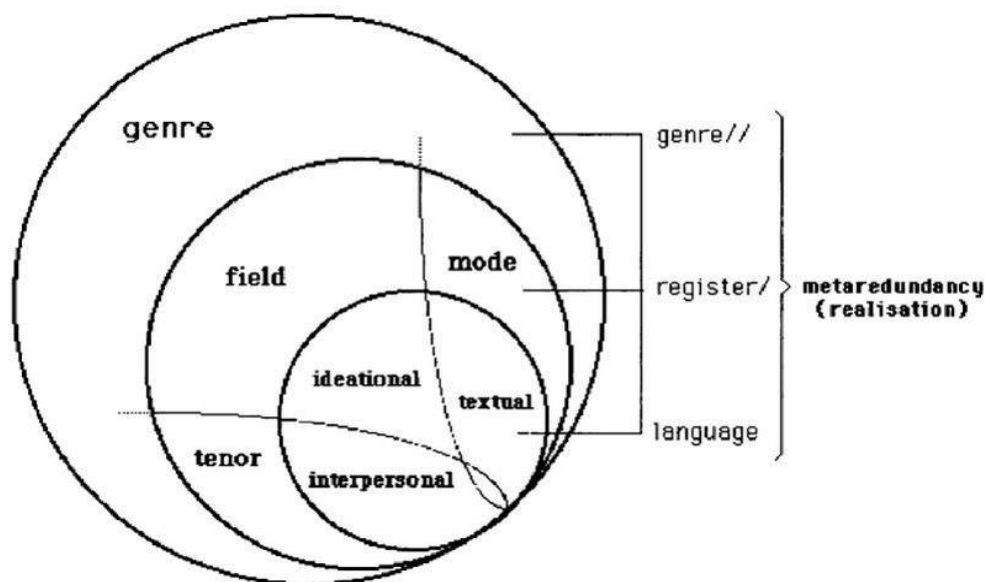


Figure 1 Genre, Register, and Language

Figure illustrates that meaning in texts is determined by 1) context of culture, 2) context of situation, and 3) metafunctions. (Martin 2002) ²

Ideational Function-

Ideational Metafunction explains that experience is a type of process. It is realized through the field. The field concerns what the participants are engaged in; it is derived from past experience and present situations that merge into a new meaning. It is concerned with how actions are expressed through the process of 'meaning' and uses the verb transitivity system to

illustrate how actors are connected to the actions. According to Halliday Ideational Metafunction is concerned with the function of the language that construes experiences inside (psychological) and outside (physical) our world. The ideational function relates to the inner and outer worlds of reality.

Ideational function includes the Experiential Metafunction and Logical Metafunction.

The Experiential- clause as representation means that one function of the clause is as the representation of the experience of both external realities and internal reality.

According to Halliday (1978:112)³, whenever one reflects on the external world of phenomena or the internal world of one's consciousness, the representation of the reflection would take the form of 'content'. This form of content is called the experiential meaning.

The Experimental function of language is realized by the transitivity system of language. Transitivity has three elements processes, participants and circumstances. It is interpreted as a what-is- going-on process, which is related to material actions events states and relations. It falls into various processes. Halliday has identified the encoding process 1. Material 2. Mental 3. Relational and he classified other processes into three subsidiary process types 1. Behavioral 2. Verbal and 3. Existential

The Logical Metafunction: It works above the Experiential. It organizes our reasoning on the basis of our experience. What logical function refers to is that language expresses the logical relationship between two or more than two meaning units.

Interpersonal Function:-

The Interpersonal Metafunction is realized through the tenor. It highlights the roles of participants and the choices that they have in the situation from the perspective of power and status. The relationship between participants highlighted through the interpersonal Metafunction. The Interpersonal function is an interpretation of language in its function as an exchange. It is concerned with language as action.

Interpersonal function serves to establish and maintain the language. The Interpersonal Metafunction enacts human relationships. It is realized through Subject and Verb roles. The Interpersonal Metafunction is concerned with the interaction between speaker and addressee(s)-the grammatical resources for enacting social roles in general, and speech roles in particular, in dialogic interaction for establishing changing and maintaining interpersonal relations.

(Bloor and Bloor, 2004:11) ⁴ Interpersonal Metafunction the language is used to enable us to participate in communicative acts with other people, to take on roles and to express and understand the feeling, attitude, and judgments.

Textual Function:-

The third element mentioned by Halliday is the Textual Metafunction. The context and language structures used to carry the meanings of the text are components of the Textual Metafunction. This function is realized through the mode.

In textual function, meanings are concerned with the creation of text and the way we organize our meanings into the text that makes sense. The Textual Metafunction creates discourse and is realized through information packaging and text structuring. One of the main textual systems is Theme and Rheme.

In Textual Metafunction language is used to relate what is said or written. This involves the use of language to organize the text itself.

Objectives:-

- The aim of the present research paper is to explore Transitivity in depth.
- The research paper also described process types, participant functions and circumstantial elements of Transitivity system.

Method:-

The researcher uses the qualitative type of study to investigate. Qualitative research is appropriate to be conducted in humanities and social science because the main objective of the qualitative study is to understand the experiences, fact, realities which are experienced by any human being. Every human being has different experiences.

Transitivity Theoretical Framework:-

Transitivity is a central to experiential metafunction and a subcomponent of Ideational metafunction. Transitivity is an important concept of Systemic Functional Grammar which used as a tool for Discourse Analysis. (Halliday & Mathiessen 2004.p.181)⁵ “Transitivity is a system of the clause, affecting not only the verb serving as the Process but also participants and circumstances”

Transitivity traditionally is defined as the grammatical feature. It indicates if the verb takes a direct object then it is described as transitive. If it does not it is called intransitive. An extension of this concept is the intransitive verb. It takes both a direct and an indirect object. Halliday in his An Introduction to Functional Grammar states whether a verb takes or does not take a direct object is not a prime consideration in Transitivity.

According to Halliday (1985, p.101)⁶ “Transitivity specifies the different types of process that are recognized in the language, and the structure by which they are expressed.”

Transitivity is a part of the Ideational Function of the clause. It is the way meaning is signified in a clause. The Ideational Function of the clause is concerned with the Transmission of ideas. Its function is that of representing ‘process’ or ‘experiences’, actions, events. Transitivity signify the way the writer sees the world around him/her.

Transitivity realizes the ideational function by expressing processes. Transitivity theory provides a useful linguistic framework for uncovering the main linguistic features of certain literary discourse.

Transitivity is the set of option whereby the speaker encodes his experience of the process of the external world, and of the internal world of his own consciousness, together with the participants in these processes and their attendant circumstances

Halliday's Transitivity theory provides a useful linguistic framework for uncovering the main linguistic features of a certain literary discourse. Transitivity generally refers how meaning is represented in the clause. Transitivity has been a popular part of the analytic tool in the critical discourse analysis. The transitivity model proves a means of discovering how certain linguistic structures of the text encode the particular worldview of the ideological stand of reader or speaker. It plays a role in showing how speakers encode in a language their mental picture of reality and how they account for their experience of the world around them.

Linguistically processes may express in a number of ways. Transitivity aims at evaluating the culture, ideological, political or theoretical factors have influenced the way processes are expressed in a particular text. Halliday note that processes expressed through language are the product of our conception for the world.

The processes expressed by clauses have potentially three components. M.A.K. Halliday has mentioned three components of "Transitivity" as below:

The Components of Transitivity:-

Transitivity is made up of processes. A process consists of three components:

- i) The process itself,
- ii) Participants in the process
- iii) Circumstances associated with the process (Halliday, 2000:107)

Process:-

The Process is the key element in Transitivity. It can be related to one or more participants and circumstances. The process is the action, state or whatever that is being

referred to and is realized main verbs. The term process is used in an extended sense to overall phenomenon and anything expressed by verb this can be an event, whether physical or not state or relation.

(Halliday 1976:159) ⁷The term process is used in an extended sense, “to cover all phenomenon...” And anything that can be expressed by a over, event, whether physical or not state or relation

The three components of Transitivity Process as below-

1. The process itself which will be expressed by the verb phrase in a clause.
2. Participants in the process which refer to the roles of entitled that are directly involved in the process.
3. Circumstances associated with the process. Circumstances are typically expressed by adverbial and prepositional phrase. Circumstantial elements add information about time (when), place (where), manner (how), and reason/cause (why for what/who). They can be probed with where, why, how and when.

Types of processes:-

Transitivity generally refers to how meaning is represented in the clause. It plays a role in showing how speakers encode in the language their mental picture of reality and how they account for their experience of the world around them. Since transitivity is concerned with the transmission of ideas it is considered to fall within the realm of the ideational function of language.

Halliday subcategorizes into three main types of processes i.e. Material, Mental, and Relational. Halliday further distinguishes three subsidiary types of process i.e. Behavioural, Verbal and Existential processes. These processes represent of doing, being, sensing, behaving or existing respectively.

The following section focus on these major processes realized in the transitivity system and the participant roles that are involved in the process:

Transitivity

Table 1.1 types of process-

Process Type	Category Meaning	Participants
Material	'doing'	Actor, goal
Action	'doing'	Beneficiary Range
Event	'happening'	
Behavioral	'behaving'	Behaver
Mental	'sensing'	Sensor, phenomenon
Perception	'seeing'	
Affection	'feeling'	
Cognition	'thinking'	
Verbal	'saying'	Sayer, Receiver, Verbiage, Target
Relational	'being'	Agent,
Attribution	'attributing'	Carrier, Attribute, Identified,
Identification	'identifying'	Identifier,
Existential	'existing'	Existent

Table 1.2 the process type and Participant

Process	Meaning	Participant
Material	Doing	Actor Goal
Behavioural	Behaving	Behaver
Mental	Sensing	Sensor
		Phenomenon
Verbal	Saying	Sayer Target
Relational	Being	Token Value
Existential	Existing	Existent

(Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014:31)⁷

In this section, all the processes are focused in detail:

1. Material Process:-

Material process is the process of doing. It means that some person does the action and may be done to other person. In this process verbs can either be transitive or intransitive.

Egins (2004, 215)⁸ defines the material process as.

All these clauses are describing processes of doing, usually concrete, tangible actions. Processes of doing are what we call material process. The basic meaning of material processes is that some entity does something, undertakes some actions. This is the semantic definition of material process.

Material processes of Transitivity are processes of doing. These are usually physical and concrete actions. Material processes are the most common type clauses that contain verbs expressing action the so called ‘doing-words’. Halliday calls them action clauses expressing the fact that something or someone undertakes some action or some entity “does” something- which may be done to some other entity. There are two participants in the clause Actor and Goal.

1) Actor is the constituent of the clause who does deed or performs the action. When the clause only has one participant and is active the participant will be Actor.

2) Goal is that participant at whom the process is directed to whom the action is extended.

The goal becomes subject in the passive.

The following examples contain all Material process clauses:

Ram	Went	to Pune
Actor	Pr-Material	

These women	Left	their dinner
Actor	Pr-Material	Goal

In the passive the Goal becomes the subject and the Actor may be omitted

He	carried	the ball	onto the plane
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Actor	Pr-Material	Goal	
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The ball	was carried	on to the plane	by him
Goal	Pr-Material		Acto

Recipient and Beneficiary:

Recipient: Participant to whom the action is directed and who receives the goods.

He	Gave	the kids	some chocolates
Actor-Agent	Pr-Material	Recipient	Goal-affected

Beneficiary participant for whom some service is done

I	will make	You	a tea
Actor-Agent	Pr-Material	Beneficiary	Goal-affected

2. Mental Process:

Mental process is the process of 'experiencing' or 'sensing'. Mental process is the clause of feeling, thinking and perceive, these processes encode mental reactions such as perception, thought and feelings.

Mental process is differ from Material process. Mental process gives an insight into people's consciousness. How they sense the experience of the reality. These can be probed by asking what do you think/feel/know about a person. Mental processes have two participants.

- 1) Senser: the conscious being who is involved in a mental process by feeling thinking or perceiving.
- 2) Phenomenon it is felt, thought, or seen by the conscious Senser.

Mental process verbs can be subcategorized into three types

Cognition - verbs of thinking knowing understanding

Affection - verbs of liking loving fearing, hating,

Perception -verbs of seeing, hearing.

Cognition

I	don't understand	his question
Senser	Pr- Mental	Phenomenon

Affection

They	fear	the coming war
Senser	Pr- Mental	Phenomenon

Perception

She	heard	the music
Senser	Pr- Mental	Phenomenon

3. Relational Process:-

According to Halliday and Matthiessen, (2014, 214)⁹ the relational processes establish relationship between objects, relating “one fragment of experience to another in some kind of taxonomic relationship: this is the same as that, this kind of other”. These processes are with ‘be’ and ‘have’ as the main verb. Relational process is the one which expresses the condition of being between two participants. Halliday points out that there are three types of Relational processes in English.

1. Intensive-one is the other. The relationship between the two terms is same.

2. Circumstantial one is at the other. The relationship between the two terms is one of time, place, manner, cause, accompaniment, matter or role.
3. Possessive-one has the other. The relationship between the two terms is one of ownership, one entity possess another.

Halliday (1994) says that each type can be distinguished by two distinct modes:

- i) **Attributive Mode**-In the attributive mode a qualitative attribute is assigned to an 'entity'
 1. The structural elements expressing this mode of process are Attribute and Carrier. The attribute may be ascribed as a quality (intensive), and as a circumstance (circumstantial) or as a possession (possessive);
1. **Identifying** – In the identifying mode one entity is used to identify another. The relationship between them varies according to the type of relation process-Token and Value (intensive) of the phenomenon and circumstance of time, place etc (circumstantial) or owner and possession (Possessive). The structural function of the participants in each case are identified and Identifier.

Intensive

- i) Attribute
 - ii) Identifying
2. Circumstantial
- i) Attribute
 - a) Circumstance as attribute
 - b) Circumstance as process
 - ii) Identifying
 - a) Circumstance as participant

b) Circumstance as process

3. Possessive

i) Attribute

a) Possession as participant

b) Possession as process

(One) possessor as Carrier

(Two) possessed as Carrier

ii) Identifying

a) Possession as participant

b) Possession as process

There are two main participant roles in Relational clauses i.e. Carrier + attribute in attributive clauses, and token (that which stands for what is being defined) + Value (that which defines) in identifying one. The verbs that realize relational attributive processes are among others different forms of be, become, turn, grow, turn out, start out, end up, keep, stay, remain, seem, sound, appear, look, taste, smell, feel, stand. Example of Identifying Process-

Intensive	John	is	Clever
Possessive	Mary	has	a cat
	The fair	will be	on Thursday, April 19
	Carrier	Relational	Attribute

Example of Identifying Processes

Intensive	John	is	clever student
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			here
Possessive	The cat	is	Sita's
Circumstantial	Today	is	August, 16 2011
	Identified	Relational	Identifier

4. Verbal Process:-

A verbal process is the process of saying. The sentence that can answer the question “what did you say?” is called as the verbal process. Verbal processes are about saying. It has any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning. It exists between mental and relational processes. The verbal process expresses the relationship between ideas constructed in human consciousness and the ideas enacted in the form of language.

The participants that involve in the verbal processes, can be divided into four points' sayer, receiver, verbiage, and target.

Sayer- the participant who is speaking is called sayer

Receiver- the one to whom the saying is directed

Target- to whom the process is directed

Verbiage- what is said

5. Behavioural Process-

According to Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014: 215) ⁹, these processes “represent the outer manifestations of inner workings, the acting out of processes of consciousness and psychological states”. Behaviour process is in the middle of Material and Mental processes. In this process one is part about action that has been experiences by a conscious mind. It characterize the outer expression of inner working and reflect physiological and psychological

behavior such as breathing, laughing, sneezing, cough, dream, frown, gawk, grimace, grin, laugh, look over, scroll, smile, sniff, snuffle, state, taste, think on, watch, and so on.

Behavioural process has one participant. The participant who is behaving is called bahaver. Behaver is usually a conscious being, but the process is more like one of doing, as in Material process-

John	is laughing
Behaver	Pr-behavioural

Behavioural process often occurs with circumstantial elements, particularly of manner and clause.

Simon	laughed	at the girl's stupidity
Behaver	Pr-Behavioural	Circumstance

6. Existential Process:-

This is last a process. It has been defined as including verbs that represent existing and happening of something .Existential sentences typically have the verb 'be'. The object or event that is being to exist is called existent. Existential processes are typically preceded by there and occur at the beginning of a text. The text is moving into a new place.

Existent Processes has only one participant. The existent can be finding in any kind of phenomenon, such as thing, person, object, institution or abstraction, action or even.

There	Were	ten horses
	Pr-existent	Existent

There was	a little house	on the land
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Pr-existential	Existent	Circumstance place
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Circumstance:-

In Transitivity circumstances play very important role. Circumstances are normally subordinate to the process. A circumstance has been also defined as indirect participant. Circumstances Process element provides extra information on the ‘how, when where and why’ of the process.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004)¹⁰: “the circumstantial element is optional the circumstantial element is not directly involved in the process but enhances the process temporally, spatially and so on”.

Circumstances are deletable in the clause.Ex.

Ram	Played	the ball	very hard
Actor	Process	Goal	Circumstance

In this above example circumstances can be omitted and remaining clause still makes at list sense of grammatical.

According to (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 262) ¹¹ there are nine types of circumstances.

They are mentioned below:

Type of circumstantial	Express	Expressed by	Interrogative forms
Extent	Distance Duration	A unit of measurement	How far? How Long? How many?
Location	Place, time	Typically an adverbial group or prepositional phrase for example :	Where? When

		down, by the door, Canberra, among friends	
Manner	Means, quality, comparison	Preposition by or with. Adverbial group with – ly adverb, prepositional phrase with like or unlike	How? What? With? What ...like?
Cause	Reason for which the process takes place, intention behind an action entity on whose behalf action is undertaken	Prepositional phrase, for example: because of thanks to, for the purpose of, for the sake of, on behalf of,	What for? Why? How? Who for?
Contingency	Condition concession default	For example: in case of, in spite of, in the absence of	
Accompaniment		Prepositional phrase with such preposition as with without besides instead of	Who/what else? Who/what with?
Role	Construes meaning of 'be' and 'become'	Typically preposition as, into	What as? What into?

Matter	That which is described, referred to etc.,	Preposition such as about concerning with reference	What about
Angle	Meaning 'as ...say'	Preposition to or phrase according to in the view/opinion of	

Discussion;-

From the explanation above the researcher has analyzed that the Transitivity system can effectively analyze clause. Transitivity is the representation in language of processes, participants and circumstance. The types of process are transitive and intransitive verbs. Here, transitive refer to the 'content'. The feature of the clause which contributes to the linguistic representation of the speaker's experiences come under this Transitivity. Transitivity refers to the organization of the clause. The concept of Process, Participant and Circumstance all three are semantic category which explain how phenomenon of the real world are represented linguistic structure (Halliday 1985:102) (Halliday, M.A.K. (1985) An Introduction to functional grammar London Edward Arnold).

According to M.A.K. Halliday in Transitivity analysis six processes can be categorized. Material, Verbal, Mental, Relational Behavioural, and Existential. To recognize each process a verb is the tool to determine the type of each process. Material verbs mark the material process, verbal verbs mark the verbal process, Mental verbs mark the Mental process, linking verbs mark the relational process, behavioural verbs mark the behavioural process, and there and non-referent it mark the existential process.

Each process is composed by its participant. The material process has Actor and Goal. The actor means the one that does the deed and the Goal implies directed act. The Mental

process has Sener and Phenomenon participants. Sener is the conscious being that is feeling thinking or seeing. The phenomenon is what is sensed, felt, thought and seen. Verbal processes are processes of saying which consist of three participants the Sayer, the Receiver and the Verbiage. The Sayer is the addresser, the Receiver is the addressee and the Verbiage is the content of the message. The relational process has Carrier-Attribute, Identifier-Identified, and Possessor participants. The Behavioral process has Behavior participant. The existential process has Existent participant.

Conclusion:-

From the discussion above the researcher has concluded that the Transitivity system is way to analyses clause effectively. Transitivity in Experimental grammar is useful for reader and students to respond critically to any text. The words and structures show by writer/producer of the text reveal how they perceive and experiences what is going on in the world. An exploration of experimental grammar therefore reveals a great deal about the worldwide expressed in a text.

From all the parts above the researcher concludes that;

1. Halliday's Transitivity system can analyze clause effectively. It helps us recognize and encode out experiences of the world. Transitivity generally refers to how meaning is represented in the clause. It plays a role in showing how speakers encode in language their mental picture of reality and how they account for their experience of the world around them.
2. Transitivity is concerned with the transmission of ideas. The Transitivity system specifies the different types of process that are recognized in the language and the structure by which they are expressed. There are six processes, namely Material, Mental, Relation, Verbal, Existent, and Behavioral.

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