



Transitivity Analysis of Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron*: A Stylistic Analysis

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received:	March	27,2024
Revised:	April	30,2024
Accepted:	May	23,2024
Available Online:	June	30,2024

Keywords:

behavioral, existential, ideational, material, mental, metafunction, relational, systemic functional linguistics, transitivity, verbal.

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the analysis of Kamila Shamsie's novel *Salt and Saffron* (2001) through the lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) with special reference to ideational metafunction. The data have been taken from the text of novel for textual analysis. This analysis reveals that all six processes of Halliday's transitivity analysis are applicable on the selected text. By analyzing 22 clauses from the first chapter, this study explores that how different process types (material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential) contribute to the construction of meaning in the narrative. The findings demonstrate the ways in which characters, actions, and events are linguistically represented by providing deeper insights into the ideational meanings of the text.



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INTRODUCTION

Language has several aspects that can be found in literature and thus, literature is a good source through which we can analyze the different features of language. Among the most traditional practices in the framework of linguistics, there is the method of using literary works as primary sources for studying the characteristics of language. Being the main use of language, speaking and writing are used in voicing out thoughts, feelings and events. However, the context in which language seems to be exceptional is in the domain of Literature whereby language departs from usual and routine language use and becomes more creative and therefore transformative. Language is creatively given in literary works where the ordinary use of the language is elevated to the creative use. Studying literary works, language use and development can be explained in quite a sophisticated way. It is also

important to say that different types of texts call for different kinds of analysis. For example, literary texts can be classified as novel and short story in contrast with non-literary versions which are newspapers and speeches. Thus, each of the genres is marked by certain specific features and has certain difficulties in language analysis.

Since linguistics is a scientific field of study, it consists of a broad range of theories created for understanding the language in diverse manners. Among the theories that were initially set in this area, there is a universal grammar (which was propounded by Noam Chomsky). To Chomsky the major principles that regulate the use of language are innate structural principles, which are inherent in all human languages. This theory assumes that these principles of language are used in the learning of language regardless of the language being learnt. Apart from the Chomsky's work, linguistics is the study of language employing such perspectives as semiotics, phonological, stylistics, and grammatical. This research is centered expressly on syntactic analysis and includes Chapter One of Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron* (2001) for analysis. The theory used as the main paradigm for this analysis is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), specifically using ideational metafunction. This framework analyzes the various elements and their relations within the text emphasizing on the social uses of language in literature.

Research Questions

This study is implemented to answer the following research questions.

- 1) What linguistic choices have been made in order to construe a particular experiential world in chapter one of *Salt and Saffron*?
- 2) What transitivity patterns do Pakistani novels make to create ideological effects on the readers through literary discourses?

Literature Review

Riaz and Nguyen (2012) suggested that the history of transitivity analysis can be traced to Hallidayan metafunctional analysis of William Golding's *The Inheritor* as one of the first pieces of the work in the field. Subsequently, different aspects of the analysis of transitivity have been used by researchers to identify the ideologies and meanings of other texts. Interpretation through transitivity analysis has been applied to examine both written and spoken texts including novels and literary texts, newspapers, speeches among others to try and unearth the true intention of writing that is contained in the texts. Syed, Akram, and Hussain (2020) applied the similar framework to see how Hallidayan ideational metafunction can be used across the *Tell-Tale Heart* by E. A. Poe. The researchers' purpose was to define and describe various processes and situations in frequency and type based on the identified logic in the text.

Rendadirza and Ardi (2020) looked at transitivity in one of the works by Mary Norton whereas Song (2013) dealt with how text themes are formed and the characters are developed analysing *A Rose for Emily*. In order to discuss characterization, Hubbard (1999) applied transitivity in Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh*. In a study, Azar and Yazdachi (2012) tried the transitivity patterns of the main character of Joyce as Clay and one literary critique identified Maria as the Virgin Mary. Ezzina (2015) textually analyzed Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* and pointed out how the modern writers like Pynchon employs linguistic strategy.

Ahmad (2019) adopted transitivity analysis in the determination of how characters are created by language in Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*. Zahoor and Fauzia (2016) depicted semantics of *I am Malala* and identified the character construction of Malala in this tribute song. Yaghoobi (2009) systematically selected the news actors and analyzed two newspapers *The Kayhan International* and *The Newsweek* and ascertained that the two detected the same news actors but portrayed them with different characteristics indicating opposite ideologies. Riaz and Nguyen (2012) suggested that the history of transitivity analysis can be traced to Hallidayan metafunctional analysis of William Golding's *The Inheritor* as (2015) offers an excellent study on the theme of inner alienation and diasporic consciousness in *Salt and Saffron* (2001) where he signaled the theme of cross cultural of dislocation. Shirazi (2014) examined the similar text and looked into the contemporary and the traditional to reflect on how the latter affects the organizations' and individuals' perspectives on globalization and modernity. To the best of my knowledge, none have examined the selected novel from the transitivity perspective and this gap is filled through the present study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As a theoretical framework, the present study employs Halliday's ideational metafunction with descriptive qualities using qualitative method. The clauses having transitivity processes in chapter one are the data of this research. The primary source of the data is a text of *Salt and Saffron* (2001) by Kamila Shamsie whereas books related to theoretical framework and research articles are taken as a secondary source. The text is thoroughly read, the data are selected according to the theoretical framework, and are collected in form of sentences. After that the data are classified into clauses and analyzed.

Theoretical Framework

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) views language both as systemic (because there are networks of interlocking options in a language through which SFL makes meaning by choosing) and functional (because the function of language is to make meaning in a particular socio-cultural context), (Halliday (1985a), as cited in Eggins (1994)). It analyzes a text in four distinct ways: context, semantics, phonology and lexico-grammar. Context is especially useful because it influences the flow of meaning construction. The context is the cultural context (which is realized through genre) and the context of situation (which is realized through register variables), (Eggins, 2004).

These register variables are:

- a) Field: Typically shows the subject that is being discussed.
- b) Tenor: This shows the participants involved in the project and their connection.
- c) Mode: This gives an indication of the level of usage of language in the process of interaction as well as the modality (written or spoken).

These three variables are realized through the three metafunctions such as ideational, interpersonal and textual simultaneously in the process of making meaning. They contribute to the reasons behind people's intuitive knowledge that people employ several parts, forms and kinds or resources of the language system (Eggins, 2004).

According to (Halliday (1985a), as cited in Eggins (1994)), language serves three primary functions: ideational, textual, and interpersonal. Each of these functions plays a distinct role in how language is used and understood.

1. Ideational Function: It is concerned with the way language represents ideas, experiences, and phenomena.
2. Textual Function: This function is related to organization of the language in a text.
3. Interpersonal Function: This function is built and revolves around the communication and utilization of language as a means of interacting and relating socially.

The aim of the present study is to analyze the selected work through ideational metafunction. The ideational metafunction helps to give the viewers representation of the pattern of experience and helps to explain what is being seen inside one’s head as well outside the head. This type of meaning or signification that is reflective and experiential in nature is known as transitivity. In transitivity system, the meaningful grammatical unit is clause since it expresses what is happening, what is being done, what is felt and what the state is, and so on (Wang, 2010). Transitivity reflects how the human perceives reality through happening, sensing, meaning, doing, being and becoming processes. However, it is close to the experiential metafunction and deals with the grammatical means that regulates various processes in languages and their organization. There are six types of transitivity processes: (1) material process, (2) mental process, (3) relational process, (4) behaviour process, (5) vocal process, and (6) existential process. In practice all the processes are different and are distinguished by the participation of certain parties. Furthermore, there is an attribute participant that can appear with two types of processes.

Material process relates to what an actor does. This process focuses on two main components: the actor (an obligatory role) and a Goal (may or may not involve in the process). Mental process includes anything to do with the senses; the sight, hearing and perception. Relational process concerns with the dimension of being and having, with classification being an attribute and identification as a process that explains something. Behavioural process is associated with actions which are carried out through one’s body. Verbal process is a process of saying that consists of a Sayer (addresser), Receiver (addressee) and Verbiage (content). Existential process asserts the existence of happening of something involving one participant role Existent (the event / object being to exist), typically include the word ‘there’ as a subject.

Table 1: The Transitivity Process

Process	Participant	Circumstance
Material	Actor-Scope-Goal-Attribute-Client-Recipient	Extent-Time
Mental	Sensor-Phenomenon	Location-Place
Relational	Attributive:Carrier-process-attribute Identified: token-process-value	Manner Cause

Behavioral	Behaver- Behavior	Accompaniment
Verbal	Sayer-Receiver-Verbiage	Matter
Existential	Existence	Role

DATA ANALYSIS

The selected data from chapter 1 of *Salt and Saffron* (2001) are analyzed and interpreted applying the six processes of transitivity analysis for making ideational meaning in the text.

Material Process

The material process is related to the physical actions of the actor. The participants of material process are:

- Actor - the one performing action
- Goal - that which is affected by action
- Scope - that which remain unaffected by action
- Attribute - quality ascribed by action
- Client - for whom/which action occur
- Recipient - the receiver of goods

Like in C1 taken from the text:

*C1. Yak's milk is green. But, of course, I (Actor) never got round to **telling** (material) my fellow passengers (goal) that choice.*

In the sentence under analysis, a clause reveals that the narrator is unable to move around to convince others of her point. The verb **telling** underscores the narrator's attempt to communicate or share information. This clause not only highlights the action performed by the narrator, but also reflects the specific circumstances in which she finds herself unable to travel or move freely to prove her statements. The *passengers* in this context represent the audience to whom she is unable to present her case or provide evidence. In Chapter One of *Salt and Saffron* (2001), various clauses illustrate physical actions enhancing the narrative's depth. The chapter introduces Aliya, the Pakistani protagonist and narrator, who recounts her journey to London and the events unfolding during this travel. Through these descriptions, the author metaphorically intertwines personal experiences with historical contexts, offering readers a rich, layered understanding of both the character's journey and the broader historical narrative.

The narrative process described involves two primary participants: the Actor and the Goal. The Actor is the individual performing the action while the Goal represents the recipient or target of the action. In the given clause, the narrator (Actor) is attempting to tell the passengers (Goal) about her experiences but her inability to move restricts her from effectively reaching or convincing them.

Additionally, these processes include specific circumstances that define the context in which the actions occur. These circumstances provide crucial details about how and where the actions take place, such as the manner in which the narrator tries to convey her message or the setting of her current situation. By incorporating these contextual elements, the narrative not only portrays the actions, but also situates them within a meaningful framework by enriching the reader's comprehension of the character's experiences and the underlying themes of the story.

C2. I (Actor) walked (material) a few steps (goal) away and then turned back.

Here again *I* is the performer and *walked* is the action performed.

C3. I (Actor) had hidden (Material) amongst green (Attribute) cans (Goal) during a game of hide-and-seek,

Here (in the C3) it is seen that the performer is again *I* and the action performed by is *hidden* the she hide herself amongst cans while playing hide and seek and the goal present is *cans* and attribute is *green*.

a) Mental Process

Mental processes encompass the range of cognitive functions and emotional experiences that a mind can undergo. These processes include various activities such as hearing, seeing, perceiving, and understanding. Speaking of literary texts, thinking qualifies as one of the most often used means to describe the inner feelings and psychological conditions of subjects. To solve this problem, using mental processes, the authors can expose a reader to different facets of a character's emotional states while at the same time informing the reader about the inner psychological processes taking place. The element of mental activity occupies an important position in the given text as such processes act as mirrors and mediators which recreate inner feelings of individuals. Mental processes are used throughout the text by the author to stimulate the reader's feelings of happiness, joy, fear, sorrow, love, and hatred. This technique enables readers to relate to the characters psychologically since they feel what the characters are going through.

The mental process is composed of two main components: compares the sensor with the phenomenon. The sensor is the self or person undergoing a specific emotion or cognitive process, the phenomenon is the actual emotion or thought process being detected by the sensor. For instance, if a character experiences happiness upon the accomplishment of a self-set goal, then the character or sensor is going through joy, the phenomenon. It is useful to make this differentiation in order to explain how characters treat their feelings or moods, and how the writer transmits these feelings to the audience. Mental processes help to create a picture of characters' emotions, including the thoughts into the story makes the reader to develop certain emotions in relation to the text. By engaging with the mental processes described in the story, readers can develop empathy and a more nuanced understanding of the characters' inner worlds. The researcher has identified numerous clauses within the text that illustrate these mental processes, demonstrating how they are used to express and explore the characters' emotions and psychological dynamics. These instances highlight the importance of mental processes in enriching the narrative and engaging readers on an emotional level as in the C4 selected from the text show:

C4. *I (Sensor) wanted to say, Where are you from? You look Pakistani now that you've removed your baseball cap, though on the plane I (Sensor) **assumed** (mental) you were a tanned (phenomenon), possibly multi-racial, American.*

In this line the mental process is identified by **assumed** and here the sensor is **I** which implies for the narrator.

C5. *He (Sensor) **knew** (mental) all my family stories (phenomenon) – all, except the most important one – and I didn't even **know** (mental) his name (phenomenon). I moved towards him, then **feltabsurd** (phenomenon) and walked away.*

Here in the C5 it is shown that there might be more than one sensor, one is Aliya and the other one is the man whom she is talking to and the phenomenon is that the man knows about Aliya and her family but Aliya doesn't know about him, not even his name and this make her feeling absurd. **He** and **I** are sensor and the process identified are **knew** and **felt**. This process indicates what they know and that are they feeling.

C6. *With relatives, even those you haven't **seen** for many years (phenomenon), as I (Sensor) hadn't **seen** Samia since I was seventeen and she twenty-one, you can recognize what their expressions hide because someone you **know** (mental) well – in this case, my father – has exactly the same manner of concealment.*

In C6, it is illustrated that Aliya is reconnecting with her cousin after an extended period, and this prolonged separation has left both of them uncertain about how to respond. Both Aliya and her cousin Samia exhibit similar reactions, marked by a mutual sense of shyness and hesitation. This shyness, which has developed over the long gap, contributes to their awkwardness and distance during their reunion. In this context, the sensor in the sentence is again represented by **I**, consistent with previous instances. The phenomenon described involves Aliya's struggle with her emotions and reactions as she meets her cousin after such a long time, highlighting the emotional gap and the historical context that has shaped their interaction. This scene effectively reflects the broader historical narrative woven into the story, showcasing the impact of time and separation on personal relationships.

b) Relational Process

Relational process is the process of being. It has three main processes: attributive, identifying and possessive. And there are two participants involved in this process named: a carrier and an attribute. It is the process that shows relation with others. The relational process is shown by the verbs like become and to be as in clause 7:

C7. *I (Carrier) was becoming a **moody cow**. (Attribute)*

Here **I** is the carrier and **moody cow** is an attribute.

c) Behavioral Process

The behavioral process shows the behaviour that is found in the chapter. The behavioral process not used very often in this text. It consists of two main components one is Behavior (actor) and the other one is Behavior (act). Behavior is the person or the actor who performs and Behaviour is the process or act that is performed. This is not so important like other four processes but this exists in every text.

Here are some examples of behavioral process:

C8. **He** (Behaver) was just being **polite** (Behaviour).

Here **He** is the Behaver and **polite** is the Behaviour in this clause.

C9. **I** smiled. (**I** is Behaver and **smiled** is Behaviour)

C10. **I** responded with silence. (**I** is the Behaver and **responded** is the Behaviour)

C11. **Samia** grinned. (**Samia** is the Behaver and **grinned** is the Behaviour)

d) Verbal Process

The verbal process identified by verbs like tell, say etc. and the actual content of the message is called Verbiage. There is use of verbal process at various points throughout the chapter.

C12. – that **he pulled my luggage off** (Verbiage) the conveyor belt at Heathrow (Location) while **I** (Sayer) was still stuck in the immigration line, waiting for a turbaned Sikh who dropped his aitches to finish scrutinizing my Pakistani passport.

This clause is a verbal process where **I** is Sayer and **he pulled my luggage off the conveyor belt** is Verbiage.

C13. **I** (Sayer) wanted to say, **Where are you** (Receiver) **from?** (Verbiage)

In this clause, **I** is the Sayer, **Where are you from?** is the Verbiage, and **you** is the receiver.

C14. We hugged goodbye (his initiative, but I saw no reason to resist) and when I turned to go **he** (Sayer) said, 'Hey, **Aliya** (Receiver). **How much of it is true?** (Verbiage)'

C15. '**Where are you coming from?** (Verbiage)' the cabbie (Sayer) asked

C16. **You lie so well, everyone will know we're related,** (Verbiage)' **Samia** (Sayer) said

C17. **Samia** (Sayer) said, '**Look, Aloo, I know this has always been your home away from, so it must be just a little bizarre to think I've taken it over, but really, truly, I'm only here doing research for a few months.** (Verbiage)'

C18. **I** (Sayer) said. '**Can we avoid the tangle of family rights and privileges for just a few more seconds?**' (Verbiage)

C19. **Samia** (Sayer) said, '**Have you ever asked yourself why you don't tell that story?** (Verbiage)

e) Existential Process

The existential process, as a component of transitivity, is concerned with indicating the existence or presence of entities within a particular context or location. This process helps

establish the presence of participants or elements within a narrative space, thereby providing a sense of location and situational grounding.

In the analysis of Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron* (2001), the existential process was identified primarily in the depiction of locations and circumstances where the characters or events are situated. This type of process effectively situates the characters and their actions within specific contexts, enhancing the reader's understanding of their spatial and situational realities. There are many clauses that deal with existential process.

C20. He (Existent) pulled my luggage off the conveyor belt at Heathrow (Location).

Here **He** is the existent and **Heathrow** is the location.

C21. I (Existent) stepped out into London (Location).

Here **I** is existent and **London** is location.

C22. Samia (Existent) flung her arms around me and pulled me into the flat.(Location)

Here **Saima** is existent and **into the flat** is location.

Table 2: Overall Result of Transitivity Analysis

Clause Number	Participant	Process Type	Circumstances
C1	I, got around	Material	
C2	I	Material	Manner
C3	I, green cans	Material	
C4	I, assumed you were a tanned	Mental	Manner, Accompaniment
C5	He, I	Mental	
C6	I	Mental	
C7	I, moody cow	Relational	
C8	He, Polite	Behaviour	Manner
C9	I, smiled	Behaviour	
C10	I, silence	Behaviour	Manner
C11	She, grinned	Behaviour	Manner
C12	I, luggage	Verbal	Location, Accompaniment, manner

C13	I, you	Verbal	Location
C14	I, he	Verbal	
C15	The Cabbie	Verbal	Location
C16	You, Samia	Verbal	
C17	Samia	Verbal	
C18	I	Verbal	
C19	Samia, You	Verbal	Cause
C20	He	Existential	Location
C21	I	Existential	
C22	Samia	Existential	

Participants mainly involve are "I", "He", "She", and named individuals like "Samia".

Process types include material, mental, relational, behaviour, verbal, and existential processes.

Circumstances which are frequently involved include manner, location, accompaniment, and cause.

This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of how actions, states, and interactions are distributed among the participants in the given text, illustrating the range of processes and circumstances influencing each clause.

DISCUSSION

The narrative of *Salt and Saffron* (2001) reveals a dexterous approach to depicting events and actions through its use of transitive and intransitive clauses. This process reflects how actions and occurrences are conveyed within the text. Descriptive and narrative sentences are employed often throughout the novel; however, there is more of a focus on the narrative sentences describing the events than ones solely concentrating on action. There is inflated use of material processes, these clauses tend to present different activities executed by the characters, contributing to the development of the plot since such actions are concrete. For example the novel starts from an airport, the plot is told from the first person narrative point where the protagonist is identified simply as 'I'. This first scene of the novel indicates what is headed for the readers in the entire novel; too much detail is provided on the physical actions by use of action oriented clauses.

In the text under analysis, material processes bear enormous potential in forming the reader's perception of the actions of the individual characters and the sequence of happenings. What is interesting is that these processes are not only functional, but are also closely interlinked with the thematic plan of the novel. This is particularly the case when the physical actions of the characters are used to explain their experiences and feelings. For instance, the portrayal of

how the narrator moves and communicates at a certain airport paints the readers a picture of the protagonist's close environment. The exploitation of material processes emphasizes the process of the events and the ongoing action; readers identify the events as they are in the sphere of narrating. Such view not only adds the sense of the plot reality, but also creates additional subtexts to characters' behaviors and the development of the story. The ability to intertwine physical actions with textual descriptions thus aims to enhance the reader's interaction with the text and the general entertainment value.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the various strands of analysis addressed above, this research responds to both research questions concerning the linguistics choices and transitivity patterns employed by Kamila Shamsie in chapter 1 of *Salt and Saffron* (2001). It is possible to establish that transitivity contributed to the text of the novel and is significant in it. Shamsie uses effective poetry to make the reader feel the emotions of the characters. The study uses transitivity analysis to examine 21 of the clauses that are chosen from the novel. This study reveals the presence of all six transitivity process types: mental, material, behavioral, verbal, existential, and relational. All process types are observed in the given text by making the narrative more profound. Aliya, the Pakistani girl living in USA but originates from Mordernistan, is the main character of the story *Salt and Saffron* (2001) and it presents a historical narrative right from invasion to partition. The first chapter of the novel primarily covers Aliya's arrival to the US and all that transpires from that point on. In this chapter, the reader is also being formally introduced to several characters and gets an insight to the themes encompassing the novel. Also, it is noted that the most commonly observed transitivity activity happened at the verbal, material, and mental levels. Verbal activities dominated, and many of the scenes depicted the characters' discussions and communication. Non-material processes were also vital, which depict the practical events that occurred as described in the text. Also, there is much focus on thought processes that describe shifts in emotions and psychological conditions of the characters. In watching the show, the researchers are able to see a depiction of the characters and facets of life through the interaction of the point, cardinal, and enclose processes. Such changes in situations and feelings provide a psychological and, thus, thematic density of Shamsie's story. Hence, this study demonstrates how the analysis of transitivity processes in Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron* (2001) becomes the key concept for evaluating the contribution of these processes to narration and the view of the book's emotional and historical layers.

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