

## A CORPUS-BASED TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF ‘*NOBODY KILLED HER*’ BY SBAYN JAVERI

*Aisha Zulfiqar Choudhary*

*Lecturer, Department of Applied Linguistics, Government College University, Faisalabad. [aisha.appliedlinguistics@gmail.com](mailto:aisha.appliedlinguistics@gmail.com) (Corresponding Author)*

*Maryam*

*M. Phil Scholar, Department of Applied Linguistics, Government College University, Faisalabad. [merrych686@gmail.com](mailto:merrych686@gmail.com)*

### **Abstract**

*Transitivity analysis is a popular method for examining the author’s ideology, character analysis and other characteristics beyond the level of sentence. This research paper deals with the transitivity analysis in the Pakistani novel *Nobody Killed Her* written by Sabyn Javeri. The objective of this study is to analyze the participants, processes, and the circumstances that arise on the level of clause and to find out the power dynamics through the frequently occurring transitivity processes. This study also focused on the power relations or power dynamics to establish the meaning and interpretation of discourse through transitivity. Several analyses have been done on the novel *Nobody Killed Her* but no study has investigated the transitivity processes, so this study focused on the six processes; material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral and existential fall under ideational or experiential meta-functions (one of the meta-functions). Material Process is the dominant process in the novel with the frequency 12.7%. According to the findings, the researcher found out that material process was dominant throughout the novel. Halliday and Hasan’s (1994) model provided a systematic way to interpret the nuances of transitivity processes within the novel’s narrative. The data was analyzed using the UAM corpus tool (Version 6.2).*

**Keywords:** Transitivity Analysis, Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics, *Nobody Killed Her*, UAM corpus tool, Power Dynamics.

### **Introduction**

Halliday’s functional grammar (1985) focuses on how language is used and works. SFL acknowledges that language has a significant influence on our lives and the process of meaning making in the language both shapes and is shaped by the situations in which language is used. Every language provides an abundance of alternatives for meaning interpretations to its speakers and writers. Through a comprehensive text-based grammar, SFL makes it easier for researchers to identify the choices, speakers and writers make, based on linguistic systems and investigate how such decisions are useful for interpreting meanings of various kinds.

Every clause, we say or write, simultaneously realizes one of three abstract functions (meta-functions) described by SFL, which links language usage decisions to the situations in which language is used. However, generally, it addresses all kinds of texts (Winch, 2013 & Feng, 2013).

#### **1.1 Research Questions**

What are the frequently occurring features of transitivity in *Nobody Killed Her*?

How does the most frequently occurring process contribute in examining the power dynamics portrayed in the *Nobody Killed Her*?

#### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Transitivity Analysis is a key concept in systemic functional linguistics looks at how language constructs processes, participants, and circumstances within clauses. While a lot of research has been done on this novel using different themes but no study has been done using this transitivity framework. This study aims to bridge this gap by performing a corpus-based analysis of Sabyn Javeri novel *Nobody Killed Her*.

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Background

Transitivity is a significant semantic feature that impacts processes, participants and circumstances (Halliday, 1985). According to Halliday (1994), there are six processes; material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral and existential. Every process has a unique set of components. This indicates that, it is simple to identify the process in a clause with the aid of an understanding of these participants. The ideational or experiential meta-function discussed in detail in this research, particularly in regard to the processes and the idea of transitivity.

SFL explains language systems and the purposes they serve, showing the manner in which social actors interpret their interactions and construct their experiences. According to the systematic viewpoint, language is viewed as a network of dynamic, open system that speakers and authors continuously choose from when they utilize it, either preserving or altering the systems throughout time as a result of their decisions. For instance, the system of transitivity provides a variety of choices for ideational (content) meaning, that covers all the ways language can communicate experience in different ways, such as by doing, sensing, speaking, or being process are described by the SFL analysis of transitivity.

Systemic functional grammar of transitivity was used for the purpose of analytical tools in the study as it is mainly emphasized the meaning and the SFG could be applied and used as a code to analyze and comprehend the data. In order to make a comparison of transitivity on the grounds of notion associated with being traditional whether it is a transitive or an intransitive verb, however, its main concentration lies on the object of the transitive verb and the verb. It has such kind of approach that is being conveyed to look at the phrase level. Furthermore, the traditional meanings of the phrasal level don't affect or take into account the role of a subject.

#### 2.1.1 Meta-Functions

The first meta-function in the model is the ideational or experiential meta-function. This function allows the writer or speaker to express through language what they have experienced in the real world. This function encompasses his language acts of speaking and understanding as well as his responses, thoughts and perceptions (Halliday, 1997, p.332).

Interpersonal meanings are realized through lexico-grammatical systems of Mood and Modality and by the selection of attitudinal lexis. The textual meta-function is the structuring of meaning and language itself, which is meant to be a message, which is inherent to language. It makes the connections inside language possible, allowing the experiential and interpersonal meta-functions to relate to one another.

There are two sub-meta functions inside the ideational meta-functions; the logical meta-function and the experiential meta-function. Another name for experiential meta-function is transitivity network system. In the transitivity network, Halliday claims that the sentence serves as the fundamental analytical unit since it embodies the experiences, interactions and messages (Halliday, 1985, p.53). From the standpoint of systemic functional linguistics, the experiential meta-function is responsible for creating the experiential component about reality, which consists of occurring, acts, and events.



### 2.1.2 Types of Processes

In ideational meta-functions, there are different types of processes addressing with the grammatical system of transitivity are found in the language basically comprised of material processes, mental processes, verbal processes, relational processes, behavioral processes, and existential processes.

<b>Types of Process</b>		
<b>Types of Process</b>	<b>Categories of Meaning</b>	<b>Functions of Participant</b>
<b>Material</b>	Act of Doing (go, come, give)	Actor, goal, recipient, client
<b>Mental</b>	Experiencing, Sensing (think, feel, seeing)	Sensor, phenomenon
<b>Verbal</b>	Act of Saying (said, tell, argue)	Sayer, verbiage, receiver, Addressee
<b>Relational</b>	Being, becoming (be, become, has, own)	Carrier, Attribute, Possessor, Possessed
<b>Behavioural</b>	Act of Behaving (laugh, smiling, staring)	Behaviour
<b>Existential</b>	Existing (there, exist, occur)	Existent

**Figure 2.2** Types of Processes

In this study, the author used the Halliday's model of Transitivity, its visual representation is given below:

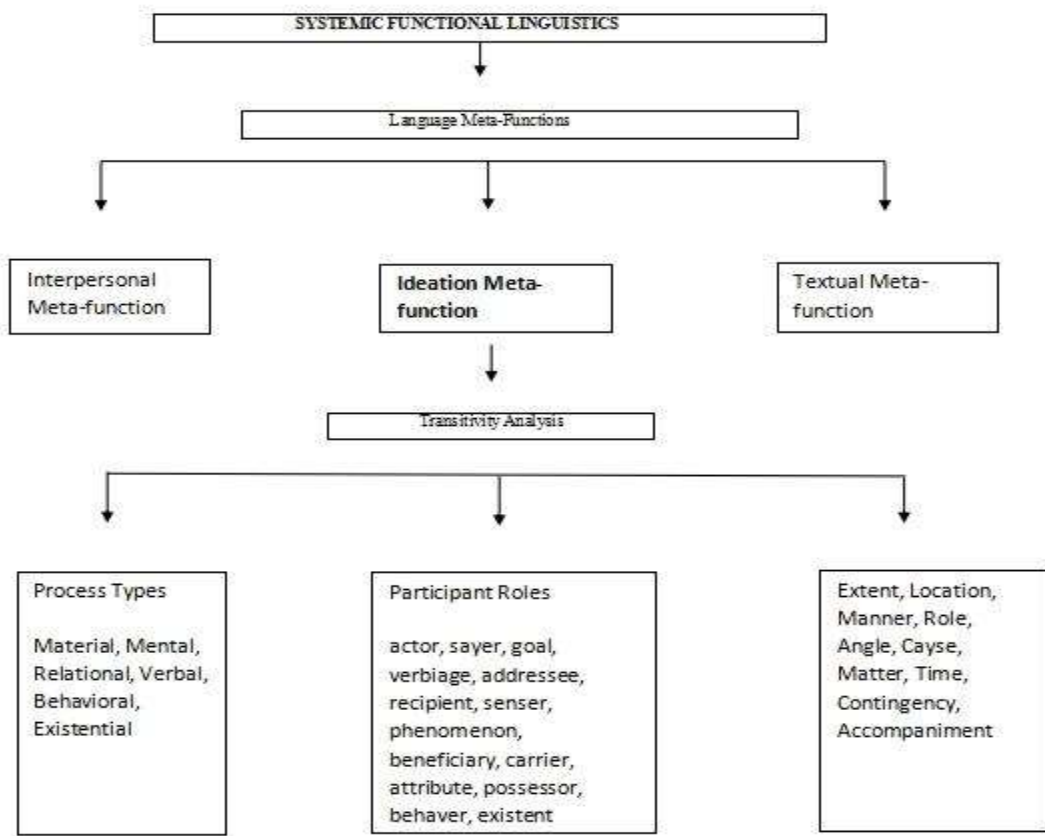


Figure 2.3 Theoretical Framework of Hallidayan model of Transitivity

2.2 Review of Related Literature

In a recent study, Mahmood and Hashmi (2020) conducted an analysis of the character of Nilopher in *The Stone Women*. This is a corpus-based study that employed AntConc software to determine the frequencies of six processes. Halliday (1994) model has been employed theoretically to evaluate the data. The analysis discovered that for Nilopher, the writer mostly utilized the material process in the text, portraying her as a self-assured, dishonest and fearless young woman. Additionally, the linguistic device I as a pronoun demonstrates her audacious and self-possessed personality through the concordance lines extraction and analysis. Nurlala et.al (2020) examined the narrative Hikayat Delhi in the context of transitivity analysis in its English translation. The study employed a mixed method approach. It is discovered that this text has made extensive use of material process, and the author described the occurrence of many events and the various activities carried out by the characters in his work.

Anggraini (2018) in her research examined three of the Donald Trump speeches from 45th US President Election to analyze transitivity and to study how the use of language create and recreate ideologies. Her work employed a qualitative and descriptive research methodology. She employed the Norman Fairclough model for ideological production and SFL theory for transitivity process. She made a connection between Fairclough’s CDA model description stage and transitivity from SFL. Her primary concern was transitivity process, which she used to express ideologies. Additionally, she described how Fairclough’s Interpretation and Explanation phases,

ideologies might also be studied and/or exposed through the application of transitivity model. She revealed that her work for analysis contained 708 clauses. Eventually, the study revealed that Donald Trump used the number of processes in his speeches.

In an earlier study, the courtroom language has also been analyzed while using Halliday's transitivity model and concluded that in courtroom language hidden messages are frequently created which a layman finds it difficult to grasp (Bartley, 2017). Yaqub et al. (2017) examined the material type and its subsystems in both English and Urdu versions of novel "*Things Fall Apart*," as well as its translated version "*Bikharti Dunya*." The corpus was annotated in UAM CT using a built-in strategy and tagged by POS tagger. Using samples from Urdu literature the research analyzed this particular and specific similarity and English, which additionally demonstrated certain procedural limitations because of the different structure in both languages. The study demonstrated how the ideational functions of the two languages differed. However, the focus of this study was to study the difference between the original text and its translations and how translations are supposed to be conducted by the field-specialized trained translators.

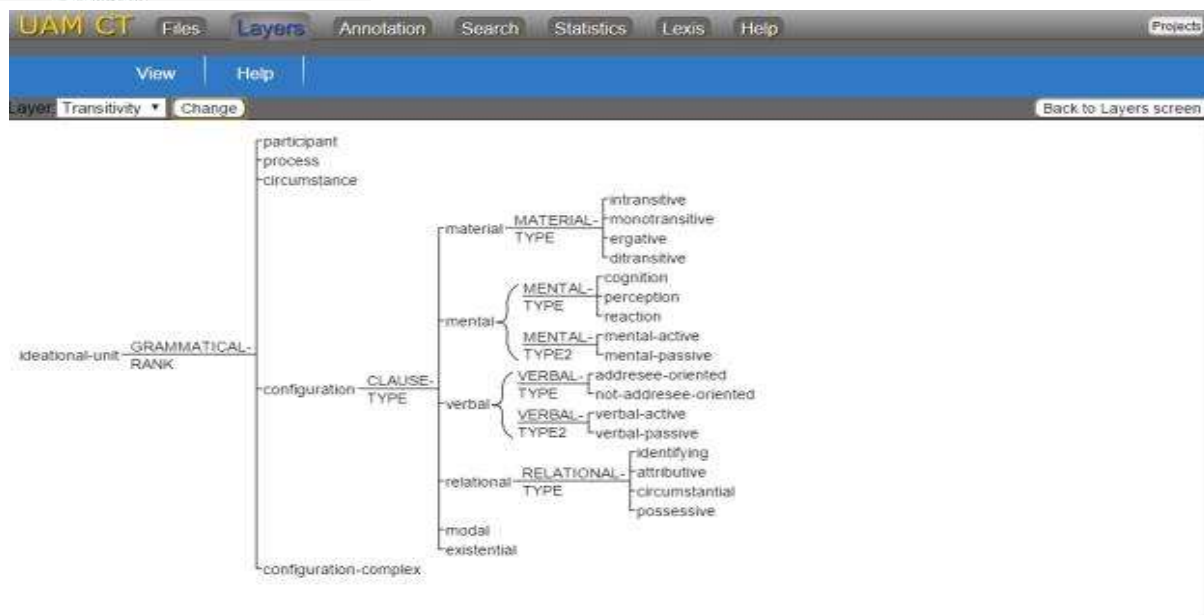
Kurnia (2018) chose qualitative research method. She collected and analyzed data using, seeking, reading, reducing and categorizing data. Her primary goal was to ascertain the meanings of the sentences. She went into great detail about the participants and procedures. There were 639 participants and 467 transitivity participants. She discovered that certain short stories emphasized the material process. Kurnia showed that the reader was informed about the story's storyline by the prevailing material process. Bhati et. al (2019) in order to explore the primary components of Ideational meaning through Transitivity in Beckett's "*Waiting for Godot*," uses the computational tool UAM Corpus Tool (UAMCT). The results show that Material processes; which lack agents or a defined direction, predominate significantly in the play and contribute to the characters' timeless and spaceless existence.

Rashid (2016) explored Hiroko's character from *Burnt Shadows* through transitivity model. SFL theory was employed in the development of Hiroko's persona. He separated the literary work into four divisions for analysis based on the circumstances surrounding the incident. He examined each of those four components separately, combining the findings from the various sections at the conclusion. He discovered that the chosen text contained 331 participant roles.

### **Research methodology**

The data is taken from the novel *Nobody Killed Her* by Sabyn Javeri published in 2017. The PDF version of novel is available online. It has been downloaded and then it was converted into text files for the analytical purposes.

The instrument used for the data analysis is UAM corpus tool (6.2 version). The UAM corpus tool has been developed by Mick O'Donnell (2009). This tool is utilized for the annotation and segmentation of the texts. The features included in this corpus tool are text annotation, layers and statistics.



**Figure 3. 1** Annotation Scheme of Transitivity

The annotation scheme shown above is used for the analysis of transitivity within a grammatical framework that is likely to be grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). It is not only a labeling scheme but it is an important tool that shows how language constructs different meanings.

**Results and discussion**

**4.1 Statistics of Lexical Patterns in *Nobody Killed Her***

The corpus tool represented the statistics after annotation of the text. The statistics are represented in the figure as follows:

**Table 4. 1** Lexical Patterns of Ideational Unit in *Nobody Killed Her*

Length	Ideational Unit
Number of segments	70285
Tokens in segments	332547
Words in segment	307057

The graphic displayed above in the Table 1 is the statistics of the lexical patterns. The information is exported from the corpus tool.

**Table 4. 2** Statistics of Clause Type in *Nobody Killed Her*

Feature	N	Percentage
Grammatical Rank		
Participant	20610	29.3%
Process	17807	25.3%
Circumstance	12439	17.7%
Configuration	15170	21.6%
Configuration complex	0	0.0%
Total	66026	93.9%

Table 4.2 shows grammatical rank is used to test to statistically assess and organize the corpus. The transitivity features are ascribed various grammatical rankings, including Participant, Process, Circumstances, Configuration, and Configuration complex.

**Table 4.3** Statistical of Transitivity Process in Nobody Killed Her

Clause-Type	N	Percentage
Material	8952	12.7%
Mental	2242	3.2%
Verbal	1306	1.9%
Relational	1203	1.7%
Existential	118	0.2%
Total	13821	19.7%

Table 4.3 presents a detailed breakdown of the different types of clauses in the corpus under analysis, including their distribution and percentages. Clause types are divided into six groups as given in the table: Material, Mental, Verbal, Relational, Existential.

The results show that the participant among other units in grammatical rank is the dominating element of transitivity in the data and statistical data for process, circumstance, also demonstrated a significant frequency. Additionally, material clauses predominate in clause kinds. Mono-transitive, intransitive, attributive and mental-active clauses are the most common sub-types among the sub-clauses of clause types. These components point to various acts, semantic roles, and characteristics of a narrative text.

The transitivity analysis of *Nobody Killed Her* uncovers specific patterns that define the narrative structure of the book. According to this research, the employment of different processes, participants and circumstances frequently shaped the transitivity patterns, all of which have a major impact on the storytelling. Participant is the most apparent feature in the *Nobody Killed Her*'s transitivity analysis with the frequency 20,610 times (or 29.3% of the corpus). Processes emerge as the second most occurring feature in the transitivity analysis of the *Nobody Killed Her* with the occurrences of 17,807 (25.3%). The most dominant process is the material processes, which are verbs of actions, suggesting a strong focus on occurrences and acts.

The plot appears to be action-driven, with a major focus on the actions of the characters and their interactions with surroundings, based on the material processes that make up the majority of the text (12.7%). Third most emerging feature is Circumstances in the transitivity analysis of *Nobody Killed Her*, which comprises 12,439 instances (17.7%). It offered the background setting for activities and exchanges. By placing events into particular contexts, these circumstances enhance the story by providing specific details about the surroundings, conditions, and manner in which activities take place. The primary circumstantial components (17.7%) are the date, time, mode and purpose. These elements improve the narrative by establishing the actions and interactions in a specific scene. Events in *Nobody Killed Her* help to build a complex and captivating story world that portrays the sociopolitical context in which the characters live.

The dominance of material process is quite significant. It focuses on the actions and events that take place. This process illustrates the material or outside world's experience. Material processes are often used to interpret the primary events. Oktoma's (2017) found out that the majority of narrative texts contain material processes often. These are prevalent in languages that arise naturally. The narrative text is specified by the material processes or phrases that dominate. With 8,952 instances, Material processes are the most prevalent type (12.7%). There are several

sub-types of these processes, including ditransitive (0.2%), ergative (1.2%), mono-transitive (7.5%), and intransitive (3.8%). A great emphasis on actions taken by one participant onto another is shown by the high frequency of mono-transitive clauses, which reflects the dynamic aspect of the narrative. For instance, decisions to call elections or turn down the requests of others highlight how crucial are moving the plot along. The novel's frequent use of material processes indicates the author's emphasis on actions and events, highlighting the concrete and material elements of the story.

This frequency shows how crucial character actions and interactions with their surroundings, thereby to move the plot forward. With a focus on themes of agency, control and the consequences of acts, the author hopes to fully engage readers in the character's tangible reality. In addition to make for an exciting story, this emphasis on material processes also makes actions and their results crucial to comprehending the novel and its underlying concepts. On the other hand, existential (0.2%) is the least frequent process in the novel, suggesting that the story places a little focus on existence. The uncommon usage of existential clauses. The author's choice to show more dynamic and active interactions rather than static explanations is reflected in scarcity. The novel main focus is on decisive actions and consequences rather than hypothetical or possible scenarios.

Material processes are frequently used, which emphasizes the author's intention to draw attention to the procedures used to exercise and maintain authority. Because of the narrative's emphasis on specific actions, the researcher able to interact with the intricate interplay of power dynamics and gain an accurate grasp of authority, control and resistance. There are five major themes of Power Dynamics that emerged from the *Nobody Killed Her* and the researcher analyzed these themes and extracted examples from the novel through the transitivity analysis utilized UAM corpus tool. These themes are, Authority and Hierarchy, Manipulation and Influence, Social Solidarity and Mobilization, Social Control and Conformity, Interrogation and Cross-examination.

The examples from *Nobody Killed Her* clearly illustrated the theme of Authority and Hierarchy that how power is exerted, enforced, and acknowledged within narrative. The theme of authority and hierarchy is explored in *Nobody Killed Her* through a variety of exchanges and rules, that up hold the power relationships among the characters. The command such as "Do as I say Nazo" and "All Rise" draw attention to social and political structures that seek subservience. In another example of General's manipulation of political procedures orders to "Clip her wings and get rid of her" highlight the extent to which individuals in positions of authority will go in order to keep control and stifle position.

In *Nobody Killed Her*, theme of manipulation and influence is strongly portrait through various interactions where characters deliberately or clearly attempt to control or influence others. For instance, "when a person Senator Ted Kennedy arrives its stirs up, a powerful emotional reaction in a character regardless of her not knowing who he is. So, this illustrates how the authoritative figures can manipulate the feelings and emotions simply just through their appearance. The order to Nazo "*fetch me a glass of water, won't you? "And make sure the class is clean"* quietly control her into a survival state while being appeared polite. It's actually showing the power and manipulation, controlling her reactions affecting her actions under the guise of a request.

In *Nobody Killed Her*, the concept of social mobilization and solidarity is effectively portrait in *Nobody Killed Her* to a number of moments that allow togetherness and group action. "*The growing apartment whose walls in large as more people joined the movement*" represents



the expansion of people power and shows how unity advances the common goals. The resistance provided by housewives in the form of food parcels and children in the form of posters show how individuals from walks of life being together and lend their support in any way they can.

The theme of social control and conformity is illustrated through arrange of Interactions. For example, the act of writing and calling followed by the disinterested reply “*good that you came to see me*” illustrate how social expectations which place a premium on up-holding appearances and performing social duties exerts subtle control on behavior. “*Rani madam ignorance is not as hard as ignoring you, have to keep doing it*” emphasizes the conscious effort needed to fit in with societies standards while controlling others by ignoring facts or behaviors. Cross examination is an accusing process in which motives and actions are questioned to explore potential guilt or involvement. The enquiry “*Miss Khan, must answer why is that she managed to escape unscathed while Madam Shah lost her life*” is an example of accusation technique. The transitivity patterns in *Nobody Killed Her* have a complex connection with the subjects of the novel, not mainly artistic decisions. Reflecting the novels focuses on action, conflict, and political struggle is the dominance of material processes.

### Conclusion

In this research, the author used the Halliday’s transitivity model to find out the transitive process, participants, and circumstances. In this study, the researcher also highlighted the themes of power dynamics through the most occurring transitivity feature or the process which is the material process. Material processes describe the events and actions. This is one of the main objectives of the study that through the most occurring transitive process, themes of power dynamics are explored in the study. The theoretical framework of Halliday for transitivity analysis proved is the best model. In circumstantial context, transitivity depicts the human experiences and encounters. It incorporates almost all aspects of the human experiences. Through transitivity analysis, the research succeeded to highlight the power themes in the novel. This study found that the transitivity framework is effective for analyzing a writer's style in any tale. The text can readily analyze the understanding and interpretation of a narrative by using the transitivity system, which will assist readers in probing and revealing the numerous thematic features of diverse literature narratives.

Material process is a useful process to extract a number of themes like power dynamics or power relations in the novel. This study has a potential for the contribution knowledge in the field of linguistics and literature serves as an interdisciplinary approach in both fields, as the present material of this research was examined using the Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (Transitivity framework).

This study has investigated the corpus-based transitivity analysis of the novel *Nobody Killed Her*. Halliday’s transitivity model helped advanced the field of systemic functional linguistics by providing a thorough and quantitative analysis of how various process types; such as material, mental, and relational, are used to construct meaning in the novel. This study is important because it creatively combined a literary analysis and linguistic theory, provided new perspectives on the themes of *Nobody Killed Her* and expanding our knowledge of how language affects how we perceive society and power.

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