

Research Article

Challenging the Myth: A Transitivity Analysis of Manto's The Hundred-Watt Bulb

Dr Mazhar Iqbal Ranjha,

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore, Pakistan. Email:

mazhariqbalranjha@lgu.edu.pk

Dr Khalid Ahmed,

Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Central Punjab, Lahore., Pakistan. Email:

khalid.ahmed1400@gmail.com

Sundus Gohar,

Lecturer, Department of English, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore, Pakistan. Email:

sundusgohar@lgu.edu.pk

Sumble Sarfraz,

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: sumblesarfraz@lgu.edu.pk

Abstract

The study aimed to highlight the gender stereotypes in Saadat Hasan Manto's short story *Hundred-Watt Bulb*. A Transitivity analysis was conducted to understand how language can be manipulative and how it can create a different aspect of interpretation. By using this approach researchers have attempted to unravel that language used in a different context and within different scenario can create an astonishing result. The analysis of the short story reveals that the female character is not submissive in the story of Manto rather, he portrays an emancipated woman in his writing. Manto's stand on femininity goes against the traditional set-up of damsel in distress waiting for a lad to rescue her rather she creates a niche for herself. The female character of Manto does not confine to an already settled hierarchy and shapes her as an individual. She tends to be her own hero and defies all the chauvinistic attributes, coming out from the scraps of male dominating society as a phoenix. The study may be useful in establishing Manto as a forerunner of Modernist writers and also, it may open new avenues for researchers in the domain of gender and politics.

Keywords: Manto, Gender, Roles, Transitivity, femininity

Introduction

Language, throughout the world, remains a remarkable phenomenon. People are interested in knowing and exploring that how language works and has can come up with different meanings just by changing the context. No denying the fact that grammatical patterns make language but if taken minutely language is something more than grammar, it is the social ideology and practice. According to Fairclough (1989), language is the most common form of social behaviour. Language is something that overshadows personal as well as social life and determines relationships. Halliday (1985) interprets a language as a system of meanings, accompanied by forms through which the meanings can be realized and expressed. The concept of reality and perception can be changed through the manipulation of words. Fowler (2013) brings forth the same concept when he defines discourse as “socially and institutionally originating ideology, encoded in language” (p. 42).

A dramatist, play or story writer uses the language as a tool to reflect his/her society, convey some message, teach some lesson or portray the picture of a character in the mind of the readers. Sa’adat Hassan Manto, a famous Pakistani story writer, is generally taken as a vulgar and obscene writer but if a close look is taken, the grounds get established that every time he uses such language, some of the other lessons are expected to be taken by the reader. He uses the canvas of a paper to reflect the social evils of society. However, the very feelings of the readers have somewhere put a stop to understand what lies under the carpet.

Manto takes the female silence and her body as a major theme. He discusses every single nuance but in his own way. He focuses on the identities of his characters along with ‘obscenity’ that is related to a female body. In fact, he somewhere establishes the fact that in the background of all this obscene writing, there had been something really hoarse that happened somewhere within the society. He correctly and rightly takes advantage of his artistic license and gives a picture of neglected narration and un-silencing the ‘silenced’. Although his prominent character is a female, the creature that is considered to be meek and naive yet each female character catches the attention of the reader. He intentionally makes his characters silenced to come out as yelling, e.g., Kalwant Kaur of *Colder than Ice*, Bhagbhari of *The Dutiful Daughter*, Mozail of *Mozail* and Sakina of *The Return* present an idiosyncrasy that is the emblem of the female spirit.

Women, generally, are deprived of voices and are neither allowed to speak nor are recorded. They are kept silent and violence is used as a strategy to maintain “women’s subordination to men” (Pickup, p. 303). All over the world, usually, writers present female characters and their problems as subjects of their writings but, perhaps, no one ever has discussed the ‘echoing silence’ of a women that perturbs everyone and everything. For example, Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* meticulously describes the naked procession of woman where he defines the grotesque parading of female bodies displaying communal grudge, engulfing of erasing the identities and disfiguring them to a sole status of being just a commodity. Whereas, every character of Manto is individual, and he comes up writing female heroes.

Transitivity is a tool to explore language as says Nguyen, “...researchers have tried to reveal that language structures can produce certain meanings and ideology which are not always explicit for readers” (Woolard, 1992, p.86). It helps to examine the sentence structure through the different processes, including goal, verbiage, range, sensor etc. and crack the hidden ideologies and language structures of a text. To

Challenging the Myth: A Transitivity Analysis of Manto's The Hundred-Watt Bulb

determine the different ideologies, present in the text, a good number of textual stylistic scholars have embarked on this tool (Msuya, 2014). For example, Nguyen (2012) uses transitivity analysis to explore the character of the mother and her personality in *Heroic Mother* by Hoa Pham. Msuya (2014) also employs transitivity and verbal analysis to analyze the language used by the two main characters of Peter Abraham's *Mine Boy (1946)* i.e, Leah and Xuma. Indrayani and Seomantri (2014) applies the transitivity model to Shakespearean sonnets namely *The Time of the Year*, *Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds* and *My Mistress' Eye* and come to conclude that all six of the processes are present in the wherein the material, and the mental process occurs most frequently among the others.

The paper aimed to discuss "silence" that overshadows the ambience of society as narrated by Manto through woman and her obscene body in his writings. It has attempted to explore the way Manto un-silences the silenced by analyzing his short story, *The Hundred Watt Bulb*. The model of Transitivity has been used for this purpose.

Theoretical Framework

This qualitative research applies Halliday's transitivity model to the short story to explore how Manto depicts his characters, especially female characters. Halliday identifies transitivity as a fundamental property of language that enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them. It specifies the different types of processes that are recognized in the language and the structures by which they are expressed (1985, p.101). These processes are distinguished according to the role they play in the text i.e., action, speech, state of being or state of mind. Material, mental and relational processes are the major processes (Mwinlaaru, 2012) which are found in almost every text (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013) whereas behavioral, verbal and existential processes are considered to be the minor processes (Simpson, 2004).

Material processes focus on doing some action. According to Halliday (1985), The material process indicates that someone or something is undergoing an action and that is directly proportional to someone on whom the action is being performed. Two of the essential entities of the material process are Actor and Goal. Mental process deals with feelings, thoughts and perception. It is a window to peep into the minds of characters and what is their concept of reality and how they perceive certain situation. The mental process has two participants: the Senser – the conscious being who is involved in a Mental process – and the Phenomenon – which is felt, thought or seen by the conscious Senser. The relational process clarifies the relationship of being and it is of two participants: Carrier and Attribute. Carrier is the participant who is being assigned the attribute whereas the Attribute indicates what the carrier is like, where it is or what it owns (Simpson, 2004).

Three of the subsidiary processes are also included in intransitivity that further lie into Material, Mental and Relational processes. The behavioral process lies between material and mental processes and construes the outer expressions along with psychological and physiological behaviors i.e., breathing, sneezing, laughing etc. Relational and Mental processes have Verbal process in them that represents the act of saying. Between Relational and Material Process, Existential process is found dealing with the state of being and existence.

After reading the story carefully, the sentences and clauses involving the process were isolated. These sentences were group into various units using the six transitivity processes. Some processes seemed

to overlap one another, however, an utmost effort was made to classify the sentences in their respective process keeping their context in the story in mind.

Results and Findings

The protagonist in Manto's story is a stranger, an anonymous person, who goes to see his friend at Kaiser Park and happens to meet a pimp while waiting for his friend at the *tonga* stop. All other characters of the story have also been named anonymously, i.e., friend, pimp and girl. The processes used in the story by Manto were identified and arranged under the processes proposed by Halliday.

Material Process

In material processes, a participant as an actor or agent involves in doing something (Bloor & Bloor, 1995) to another participant as a goal or an object. When the stranger arrives at Kaiser Park, a pimp offers him a girl. The story is about the feelings and reactions of the stranger on the offer. The stranger, already perplexed with the whole current scenario, gets the shock when he comes to know that a girl is being forced to act against her wish and is denied of her basic rights, i.e., sleep. His shock is extended towards the end of the story when the 'poor' and 'down trodden' girl takes the power.

Table 1

Actor	Process	Goal	Range/ Circumstance
The pimp	Took	Him	to a place where the masons were still building
The pimp	Snapped back	[himself]	
The pimp	Came		Closer
The pimp	Led	[him] The way	
The pimp	Sat		With his back to the door way
He	Stood		For some time
He	climbed	The stairs	
He	Stopped	The man (the pimp)	
He	Checked	Himself	
He	Looked	The woman	closely at her
He	Looked		In again
His friend [he]	Looked around at	The tonga	
He	Withdrew	[himself]	
He	Turned	his face	to the darkness
He	Slipped and fell		in his hurry to get away/
He	Crept		In further
He	Ran		down the stairs/ home
She	Screamed		
She	Pushed	his hand away	
She	Checked	Herself	

Challenging the Myth: A Transitivity Analysis of Manto's The Hundred-Watt Bulb

Table 1 shows that it is the stranger who, most of the time, acts either as an actor or a goal. The pimp takes him to the place where the girl lives. The pimp and the girl also act as an actor or agents but their role is very limited. Even in most of the sentences where they act an agent or objects, the stranger is a goal or beneficiary of the action. The writer has used action verbs, e.g., stand, climb, stop, checked, withdraw, turn, slip, creep and run to show the physical reaction of the stranger when the pimp offers him a girl and then takes him to her residence. These verbs reflect the mental condition of the stranger who was shocked at the offer and the pathetic condition of the girl.

Mental Process:

The mental process refers to the verbs expressing desire, affection, perception, etc. (Halliday, 1994 & Saragih, 2010). These verbs reflect the mental condition of their users and help to identify their definition of reality (Ong'onda, 2016).

Table 2

Sensor	Process	Phenomenon
He	Appreciated	Wrecked place/ the magnitude of the storm
He	Found	it impossible to rent a flat
He	Was astonished	
He	Seemed	to be stripped bare
He	had enjoyed	the pleasures of Kaiser Park
He	Thought	
He	Felt	a sharp stab of pain straight
He	Wondered	about the woman
He	could not comprehend	anything that was happening
I [he]	sympathize	with you
She	Seemed	to be completely wasted

In the story, Manto used verbs (table 2), e.g., appreciate, find, astonish, seem, enjoy, think, feel, wonder, comprehend and sympathize to reflect the mental condition of the stranger. The stranger was not only impressed by the physical appearance of the area but also was moved by the 'pathetic' condition of the girl who was being compelled to wake up and meet the physical needs of the stranger. Although the condition of the girl makes her vulnerable and she seems to be in a plight but here Manto waves his magic wand and reverses the binaries where the girl turns out to be a strong character.

Relational Process

The relational process relates two terms in a variety of ways and construes the relationships of being and having between two participants (Ong'onda, 2016).

Table 3

Career	Process	Attribute
--------	---------	-----------

This park	had	bustled with life
The bazar	was	Crowded
The transformation	Was	Amazing
The rouge and the vermilion	Were	blown away
The tiny room	Was	Bare
She	Was	a ruined building
She	Was	Silent
She	Was	Asleep
Her voice	Was	Sharp

Most of the attributes (table 3) used by Manto in this story portray the scenario of Kaiser Park. He used the words, e.g., forlorn, terrible, dark, bustled, crowded, amazing, blown away, bare and no voices to depict the prevailing condition of the park and surrounding area. He used the words, e.g., ruined building, silent and asleep for depicting the helplessness of the girl. The words “ruin building” and “sharp” reveals her tormented condition. But at the same time, these words also suggest positivity i.e., darkness is always replaced with light and ruined building can always be rebuilt.

Behavioural Process

Behavioral Process is a process of physiological and psychological behavior, e.g., breathing, dreaming, snoring, smiling, hiccupping, looking, watching, listening, and pondering (Gerot & Wignel, 1994, p. 60). Sometimes this process becomes a source of confusion as it is similar to the material process which involves the physical manifestation of mental and verbal processes (Ong’onda, 2016).

Table 4

Behaver	Behaving
She	Was silent
He	Hesitated

As shown in table 4, there are two sentences in this story that expose the psychological behaviour of the girl and the stranger. The sentence *she was silent* reflects the inner feeling of the girl when the pimp compels her to wake up to go with the stranger. The sentence exposes her unwillingness to go with the pimp. The sentence *he hesitated* used in the story for the stranger reveals his indecisiveness. He seems double minded in the situation put by the offer of the pimp.

Verbal Process

The verbal process involves a communication between a sayer and an addressee and shows activities related to information (Saragih, 2010, 8). Most of the part of this story consists of dialogues among the pimp, the stranger and the girl. Some of the dialogues are in question-answer form.

Table 5

Sayer	Process	Verbiage
-------	---------	----------

Challenging the Myth: A Transitivity Analysis of Manto's The Hundred-Watt Bulb

The pimp	Said	Take a good look
The pimp	Said	There's is fifty here
The pimp	Said	Take her
He [the pimp]	Said	No, I don't think you need this
He [the pimp]	Asked	You called me
He [the pimp]	Asked	What do you want
He [the pimp]	Asked	Do you want something
The pimp	Said	You stay here
He [the pimp]	Said	Now get up..
He	Asked	Your name
He	Asked	Where is she
He	Said	Shall I come with you
The stranger [he]	Said	Yes
He	Said	Keep it
He	Said	Lift up your face
He	Said	You can sleep here
He	Said	Come, I will take you back
I	Just said	Nothing
He	Asked	Where to
She	Said	Do your thing
She	Said	Where you brought me from
[she]	Said	Don't trouble me

The verbal process used by Manto in the story (table 5) provides information on how a pimp invites strangers to sexual activities. In most of the sentences, the stranger is the Sayer who either responds to the pimp's questions or asks him or the girl. The process also exposes the pitiable conditions of the prostitutes who are forced to undertake sexual activities.

Existential Process

The existential process represents something that exists or happens. Hancock (2005:240) argues that the existential process is a clause that presents something as an existing entity without any further prediction. The clause has an empty "there" in the subject position.

Table 6

Existential	Existent
There were	No sound, no voices
There is	Fifty here
There were	all the accoutrements of pleasurable decadence
There were	... the tongas ... still ...
There was	no stopping the sex trade
There were	Few empty vessels lying around

Table 6 shows that the process employed in the story presents the prevailing condition of Kaiser Park and its surrounding areas in contrast to the time when this place used to have great hustle and bustle. The portrayed condition of the park and its surroundings also reflect the deserted condition of the women.

Discussion and Conclusion

The transitivity analysis of Manto's short story *The Hundred Watt Bulb* reveals different processes of transitivity, i.e., material, mental, behavioral, relational and verbal processes. The transitivity model has been applied to the short story to find out what lies beyond words. Manto being a 'feminist', is said to give his female characters their own agency where they are strong, independent and willing to take the system into their hands. Manto is apt at catering for the internal ramblings of the characters. Outwardly, they may just be doing action but inwardly there is a lot more than the only action. *The Hundred Watt Bulb* is a story of a prostitute who is forced by a pimp to go with a stranger. She seems dead tired and in dire need of sleep. She resists but has to surrender to the will of the pimp. Her attitude towards the stranger is also indifferent. Though she does not act as an agent or goal in most of the clauses yet she remains the topic, and the story revolves around her. Initially, she seems a weak and the helpless girl who is not even allowed to sleep freely. At the end of the story, the stranger finds her asleep and the pimp lying dead by her side with his head crushed with a brick.

The story does not come up with any name of the character but just their adjective i.e., pimp, girl, friend. In such a scenario, the material, behavioral, relational and mental processes can help to define and determine the hidden analogies. After applying the processes, one thing becomes vivid that Manto's female character, even if a prostitute goes to the level of being marginalized or subaltern rather, she emerges with her own feminine agency. Women, throughout the world, especially, in literature are stooped too low and they seem a mere plaything in the hands of men. On the contrary, Manto does jolt the world of literature as his female characters create their own mark. He does not leave them to the mercy of men rather they (female characters) emerge as the masters of their own will. In this story, the prostitute who seems helpless and at the mercy of the pimp succeeds in making her mark when she crushes his head with a brick and enjoys soundless slumber. The "ruined building" constructs herself a new and the "silence" breaks with the voices of her own instinct.

References

1. Bloor, T., & Bloor, M. (1995). *The Functional Analysis: A Hallidayan Approach*.
2. Fairclough, A. *Better day coming: Blacks and equality, 1890-2000*. New York: Viking, 2001.
3. Fairclough, N. *Language and power*. London: Longman, 1989.
4. Fowler, R. (2013). *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. Routledge.
5. Gerot, L., & Wignell, P. (1994). *Making sense of functional grammar*. Cammeray, NSW: Antipodean Educational Enterprises.
6. Halliday, M. A. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (2nd ed.). London, Melbourne, Auckland: Edward Arnold.
7. Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. (2013). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar*. Routledge.
8. Hancock, C. (2005). *Meaning-centered grammar*. London: Equinox.

Challenging the Myth: A Transitivity Analysis of Manto's The Hundred-Watt Bulb

9. Hancock, C. (2005). *Meaning –Centered Grammar: An Introductory Text*. London: Equinox Publishing Ltd.
10. Indrayani, I. & Seomantri, Y. "Transitivity analysis on Shakespeare's sonnets". *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol 19, no 1, 2014, pp. 78-85.
11. Manṭo, Sa'ādat Ḥasan. *Sau Candle Power ka Bulb*. Trans. Kishwar Ahluwalia. n.p.
12. *Sou Candle Power ka Bulb* translated in English by Kishwar Ahluwalia.
13. Msuya, E. A. (2014). Stylistic Analysis of "Xuma" and "Leah" in Peter Abraham's Mine Boy: A Verbal Transitivity Process.
14. Mwinlaaru, I. N. (2012). A stylistic study of characterization and point of view in Chinua Achebe's anthills of the savannah: A functional-semantic perspective. *Unpublished MPhil Dissertation, Department of English, University of Cape Coast*.
15. Nguyen, H. T. "Transitivity analysis of "heroic mother" by Hoa Pha"m. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, Vol. 2, no 4, 2012, pp. 85-100.
16. Ong'onda, N. A. (2016). Transitivity Analysis of Newspaper Headlines on Terrorism Attack in Kenya: A Case Study of Westgate Mall, Nairobi. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 6(9), 77-85.
17. Pickup, F., Williams, S., & Sweetman, C. (2001). *Ending violence against women: A challenge for development and humanitarian work*. Oxfam.
18. Saranā, Mohinder Siṅgha. *Savage Harvest: Stories of Partition*. Trans. Navtej Sarna. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India, 2013.
19. Saragih, A. (2010). *Introducing Systemic Functional Grammar of English*. Medan: FBS UNIMED (unpublished)
20. Ghosh, R. (2021). Fictional and Non-fictional Narrative Representations of State Repression and Terror in the Dirty Wars in Argentina (1976-1983) and Chile (1973-1990). *International Journal of English and Comparative Literary Studies* , 2(4), 42-55. <https://doi.org/10.47631/ijecls.v2i4.258>
21. Simpson, P. (2004) *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students*. Routledge: London.
22. Woolard, K. A. (1992). Language ideology: Issues and approaches. *Pragmatics*, 2(3), 235-249.
23. Wood, L. A., & Kroger, R. O. (2000). *Doing discourse analysis: Methods for studying action in talk and text*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000