

Putting Transitivity to the Test: A Stylistic Analysis of Edward Lowbury's Poem "The Huntsman"

* Amina, MPhil Scholar (English)

** Dr. Husnat Ahmed, Senior Lecturer (Corresponding Author)

*** Mr. Jamil Akhtar, Lecturer in English

Abstract



The basic aim of this paper is to stylistically analyze Edward Lowbury's poem "The Huntsman" from the point of view of Halliday's transitivity (1985, 1994, 2004, 2014) model. As transitivity is a grammatical feature and is considered the basic approach of stylistics (analysis); the ideational, textual and the interpersonal facets are the major functions of the language. There are six processes of the system of transitivity. This analysis will be beneficial for understanding the mental, verbal and material processes of transitivity model used by the poet in his poem. As the theme of the poem is that we should think before speaking, so this research is helpful to analyze the style and structure of Edward Lowbury's poetry and different concepts to convey and fortify this concept. Themes and views are conveyed by the poet through different stylistic techniques and devices.

Keywords: Stylistics, Transitivity, Ideational, Textual, Interpersonal, Grammatical, Techniques, Devices

Introduction

A dictionary of literary devices says: The way with which a writer writes can be defined as style in writing. It is also a technique which is used by authors in their writing. It is different from writer to writer, and based on one's syntax, selection of words, and accent. It can also be called as a "voice" that reader can listen to and observe when they read the work of a writer.

There are four types of Style:

Argumentative:

1st kind of style is subject oriented in which the writer tells the reader about a particular subject or topic and the author shares his own views about the topic at the end.

Descriptive:

In second style, an event, a character and a place are described by author in detail. Mostly this style is poetic in nature. It also gives sensory detail.

Persuasive:

In this style the author mostly gives the reasons and justification about his point of view, so that he may be able to convince the reader.

Narrative:

A story is mostly written in this style. It consists of the stories of short stories, novels biography and poetry.

So a unique literary style creates a good impression on any piece of writing as well as on the readers. Ideas are depicted with the help of words, sounds, logic and sentence structure. Every author uses his own choice of literary style that has his own different expression and in this way, these choices make style.

Stylistics:

Stylistics is described as not only the study of the style of different authors and kinds of literature but also the elements of language in a scientific way.

In Marriam Webster dictionary, it is defined as the part of literature that is closely related with the study of different element: such as metaphor and diction. At the last of 18th century and starting of 19th century, the art of rhetoric finished. When 20th century begins, stylistics replaces it and is

* Riphah International University, Lahore Email: aminajutt866@gmail.com

** Riphah International University, Lahore Email: husnat.ahmed@riphah.edu.pk

*** Riphah International University, Lahore Email: hamil.akhtar@riphah.edu.pk

introduced as systematic discipline which deals with all the important characteristics of dialect. Phonology (deals with the system of sounds), morphology (deals with the study of words), Syntax (deals with the sentence structure, lexicology (deals with the meaning of words) and prosody (deals with the pattern of sounds) are the expressive aspects of language. (Cuddon 872).

It is clear that, the levels of stylistics are identified while conducting stylistics analysis. Phonology, Graphology, lexico – syntax and morphology are considered as its basic levels.

According to crystal and davy (2016), the whole writing system falls under graphology: paragraphing and punctuation as well as shaping’ of the structure of any text.

As stylistic study chooses or selects a literary piece and the traditional grammatical rules show where text deviation has occurred in the text and how it defines it. It also describes that how, by deviating the grammar rules a writer gets the specific effect in his writing.

Transitivity:

As transitivity is Halliday’s approach. It is a grammatical aspect which describes if a verb demands a direct object or not. There are three kinds of verb in transitivity.

Transitive: that takes direct object

Intransitive: that does not take direct object

Ditransitive: that take both direct and in direct object

Transitivity is closely related with linguistic system used to create experiential or ideational meaning which are basically associated with how entities and actions in a situation are described in the language. There are two concepts of transitivity; old and new. Halliday found a new and it represents the further development of the old concept. In introduction to Functional Grammar (2013), Halliday shows in a very clear sense that it is not his major concern to observe verb with direct or indirect object. He introduced three components and named them transitivity processes. In Halliday’s concept of transitivity, three components of transitivity process are given below:

- i. The first one which is categorized as verbal class or group, is called process.
- ii. The second which is categorized as nominal group, is called participant.
- iii. The third one which is categorized as Circumstance.

A clause is closely related to transitivity. An English clause consists of ideational, interpersonal and textual interpretations. (Halliday 1981:42). Halliday (1985) says that the ideational, the textual and the interpersonal are the basis which are directly linked with language.

The ideational function:

It is used to show text and to deliver information. There is main concentration on the content and on delivering information clearly and impressively so that, it can be understood and absorbed as soon as possible and easily. Transitivity and ergativity are the two main systems in ideational function.

Textual function:

The second one is textual function. It is basically used to signify discourse and is related with language as well. In this, language plays the role of text and is closely related with contexts. There are two structures in textual function. The first one is thematic structure and the second is information structure.

Interpersonal:

This function of language is used to establish / create and maintain social relations. As modality is involved in this function, so it is related to modus system. Mood and residue are the elements of this modus system. It relates to all uses of language in order to express personal and social relations. It is concerned with the relationship between the speaker and hearer and also with clause as exchange. Modality and Mood are the two parts of it. (Halliday, 1994)

As transitivity is the basic approach of this paper, so it’s necessary to discuss or elaborate it in more detail.

Then he distributes transitivity into six processes,

1. Material process	3. Relational process	5. Verbal process
2. Mental process	4. Behavioural process	6. Existential process

Literature Review:

There are many examples from other researches that help to understand the present study. Those studies are very helpful in developing views that give a better understanding of this topic.

The stylistic analysis which has been conducted on Robert Frost’s Poem “Stopping by woods on a snowy Evening” presented by Hasmi, Asim, Mahmood and Ilyas Mahmood (2019). The

researchers focus on the use of language features in the poem. In this researchers identify how the language properties are combined to form the theme and concepts of the poem. On phonological, lexico-syntactic and grammatical level, researchers analyze every word of the poem. The second stylistic analysis is of Shelley's poem "To a Skylark" by Shawa (2015). This poem is analyzed on lexico-syntactic, phonological, graphological, and morphological levels. His poetry is based on love of nature, beauty and imagination. Third analysis of the poem "The Onset" composed by Robert Frost by Bari Khan, Raffique, and Siddique (2014). It can be found that there are two types of analysis. The language components are analyzed in "The Onset". Second, with the help of imagery, sound devices and diction, theme is elucidated. Another similar analysis of Davies's poem "Leisure" is conducted by Hanif, Ahmed, & Aftab (2015). Graphology, Syntax, Semantics and phonology are linguistic techniques which are analyzed in this poem. Davies also uses very simple dialect in order to convey the basic theme of the poem and to avoid boredom.

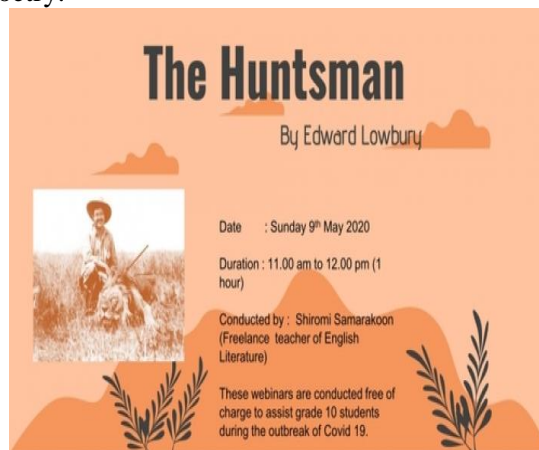
These studies are helpful for understanding this study as this one also deals with the same of field of stylistics and its major concern is also to study a poem from stylistical point of view based on a particular framework.



Edward Lowbury:

Edward Lowbury was born on 1913 in Hampstead. His father was concerned with medical profession. He was also interested in medical but he took much interest in poetry also. No Doubt, Edward Lowbury was a distinguished writer and poet.

He was too much interested in poetry as well and as an undergraduate at Oxford, he won the Newdigate prize. He wrote many books of poetry. In 1936, his 14 poetry books had been published. This shows his interest in poetry.



The Huntsman is one of his renowned poems. It is a very beautiful poem in which he describes that man should think before he speaks. Speech is a great gift of God and it should be used with care and responsibility. The researcher will make stylistic analysis from the perspective of verbal, mental and material process. Let's come to know about them one by one.

Analysis from ideational perspective:

A new information is conveyed through ideational function and will also help to communicate a content that is unknown to the speaker. There is main focus on the content and on transferring information clearly and effectively so that it can be understood and comprehended quickly and easily. Transitivity and ergativity are the two main systems in ideational function. There are six different types of processes but material, mental and verbal are analyzed in this paper.

Material process:

It is the process of doing something in the real world. It shows that some entity does something with other entity. Two participants are involved in this material process.

1. **Actor:** the doer of the process (obligator)
2. **Goal:** It means the person or entity (animate or inanimate) are affected by the process.

Actor	Material process	Goal
Ahmed	kicked	The ball
Actor	Material process	Goal
The Police	caught	The thief

Examples from poem:

1. Kagwa hunted the lion.

Actor	Material process	Goal
Kagwa	hunted	The lion
2. He found the skull of a man.

Actor	Material process	Goal
He	found	The skull of a man
3. The king called out his guards.

Actor	Material process	Goal
The king	Called out	His guard
4. They killed him.

Actor	Material process	Goal
They	killed	him
5. They rode on to the forest.

Actor	Material process	Goal
They	Rode on	To the forest

There are the examples of material process which have been used by Edward Lowbury in "The Huntsman". In very first line, he writes that Kagwa hunted the lion as hunted is a material process and is performed by an actor named Kagwa and in this sentence lion plays the role of goal. In second example. Found is the material process and he is an actor and skull of a man is a goal. In third sentence, "the king" is an actor and called out is a material process and guards is a goal. In 4th sentence, "they" is an actor and "killed" is a material process.

Mental Process:

It is the process of sensing, feeling and thinking something. It is also an internalized process. In mental process two participants are involved.

Phenomenon:

Which is felt, thought or received by sensed.

Sensor:

A sensor who is feeling, thinking and preceding three types of verbs used for sensor mental process.

Cognition verb:

It means the verbs that are used for thinking, knowing and understanding something.

Affection verb:

It means the verbs which are used for liking, loving, fearing, hating.

Perception verbs:

They are used for seeing and hearing something.

Examples from poem:

1. Never since I was born of my mother
Have I seen or hear of a skull which spoke;
2. At last they saw the skull.
3. But if his tale is lie.
4. Kagwa implored.

In the first sentence, the words hear and seen show the mental process as these are perceptual verbs. In second sentence, verb saw represents mental process. In last sentence, 'implored' is the mental process.

Verbal Process:

It is the process of telling or describing something and it is between the mental and relational processes. It shows the relationship between the ideas (set up in human consciousness) and ideas that are expressed in language form. There are three types of participants are involved.

Sayer: A person who is uttering something.

Target: The addressee is called target.

Verbiage: Speech of the sayer is called verbiage.

Examples from poem:

1. And he said to it how did you come here.
2. then he said slowly
Never since I was born of my mother
Have I seen or hear of a skull which spoke;
3. The skull said nothing.
4. The king called out his guard.
5. The skull speaks no word.
6. The guards said feel do us.
7. And the dead man answered;
"Talking brought me there".
8. And fund the talking skull.
9. The skull opened its mouth and said
Talking brought me here.
10. In the forest I found a talking skull;
11. Huntsman how did you come here?

Distribution of speech process in "The Huntsman"

	Speech process	Number of process	Percentage
1	Material	5	25%
2	Mental	4	20%
3	Verbal	11	55%
	Total	20	100%

After stylistic analysis, it is found that there are 5 material processes, 4 mental and 11 verbal processes that are used or applied by Edward Lowbury in "The Huntsman" and percentage of material is 25% and mental is 20% percent and verbal is 55% percent. This percentage shows the tendency of the writer's style towards different verb processes and their functions in the text. As these verbal processes have different functions to perform in the text, so writer uses them accordingly to make his ends meet.

Conclusion:

So, to sum up the whole discussion, it can be said that Edward Lowbury who is a modern British poet and being a doctor, his poetry has the stamp of minuteness as well as imaginative richness. He uses many types of verb in "The Huntsman" It is clear that nothing can be said without using the transitivity process. No writer or poet can express any idea without using transitivity process. So transitivity process are the basics of any text or discourse.

References:

- Bari Khan Abdul, R.S. (2014). Stylistics Analysis of the poem "The Onset" by Robert Frost. International Journal of Academic Research and Reflection,121-126.
- Crystal, D., & Davy, D. (2016). Investigating english style. Routledge.
- Cuddon, JA, Preston CE. Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory. London: Penguin Books, Print, 2010
- Halliday, 1994. An Introduction to functional Grammar. London: Arnold
- Halliday, A.K. (1985). An Introduction to Functional Grammar (2nd ed.). London, Melbourne, Auckland: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. (2013). Halliday's introduction to functional grammar. Routledge.
- Hanif, S., Ahmed, M., & Aftab, M. (2015). A Stylistic Analysis of William Henry Davies' "leisure" Journal of Literatue, Language and Linguistic,7. 30-36

- Hashmi, M. (2019). Stylistic Analysis of Robert Frost's Poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening". *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 9, 373-377
- Leech, N. Geoffrey. *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. London: Paperback, English Language series, Print, 1969
- Mahmood, M. (2019). Stylistic Analysis of Robert Frost's Poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening". *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 9, 373-377
- Shawa, W.A. (2015). Sylistic Analsis of the Poem "To A Skylark" by P.B. Shelley. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 20(3), 124-137.