

A TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF *THE STORY OF AN HOUR* BY KATE CHOPIN

Thet Lel¹

Abstract

This research deals with a transitivity analysis of *The Story of an Hour* written by an American feminist author Kate Chopin. The objectives of this research are to investigate the types of transitivity processes used in the story, and to examine how transitivity choices in the story reflect the ideology of the author. Dependent and independent clauses in the story were analysed by using Halliday's (2014) model of transitivity system. Moreover, the clauses were also sorted into agent and agentless clauses to determine the extent of agency given to human characters. The results of the transitivity analysis were then examined to detect the author's ideological influence on the portrayal of the characters, particularly the main character. The findings showed that mental and behavioural clauses are the most frequent clauses. The least frequent clauses were material clauses. Throughout the story, Chopin focused on portraying the change of flow of events in the consciousness of the main character by using mental and behavioural clauses, the use of agentless clauses, agent-like agent clauses, and inanimate agent clauses suggests that human characters were given limited agency. Notably, only about half of animate agent clauses had the main character, Louise Mallard, as the agent, implying that despite being the main character, she was given limited control over her actions and surroundings. This research proved that transitivity choices reflect the author's ideology and perspective.

Keywords: transitivity analysis, feminist stylistics, Kate Chopin, feminism

Introduction

The function of language is not limited to communication. Apart from using it as a tool of communication, language users can use it to transmit information and ideas either through spoken words or written words. For spoken words, unless they are in a planned or formal setting, people may express their thoughts and opinions more candidly. On the other hand, written language is more carefully chosen because most of the time, the author can edit or revise it. However, unlike other genres of written works, the author's belief and perspective are usually not expressed explicitly in literary works. Linguistic enquiry of literary language serves not only as a basis for literary interpretation but also as a tool to investigate the author's ideology because deliberately or inadvertently, literary texts are imbued with the ideology and worldview of the authors. As individuals' beliefs and experience of the world inevitably shape their language and vice versa, linguistic treatment of gender provides intriguing insights on how societal values shape language as well as how language shapes societal roles. Kate Chopin is best known for her stories which explore feminist themes and challenge traditional values and roles of women, particularly married women. Transitivity analysis of Chopin's short stories can reveal how her feminist ideology shapes her writing.

Feminist stylistics is the interface between feminism and stylistics and is aimed "to account for the way in which gender concerns are linguistically encoded in texts" (Burke 2014). According to Sara Mills (2005), the purpose of feminist stylistics is "not only to describe sexism in a text, but also to analyse the way that point of view, agency, metaphor, or transitivity are unexpectedly closely related to matters of gender, to discover whether women's writing practices can be described, and so on." It can be said that feminist stylistics highlights the use of language

¹ Department of English, University of Yangon

as a tool to express sexist views as well as to recover and revalue the women's marginalized voices.

In order to examine how language reflects a particular view of women, Mills (2005) proposed three levels of analysis: the level of the word, the level of the phrase/sentence, and the level of discourse. At the level of the word, Mills (2005) dealt with sexist use of individual words and recommended gender-free use of language. As feminism is not confined to sexist words, Mills (2005) also proposed to analyse language at the level of the phrase/sentence, particularly with "the way that phrases and sentences make sense in relation to their co-text, their context, the history of their usage and also the background knowledge which is needed for their making sense." Mills (2005) included analysis at the level of discourse to view the complete picture of the ideology expressed through textual patterns and structures. This research carries out a phrase/sentence level analysis, particularly transitivity analysis, of *The Story of an Hour* by Kate Chopin. The focus of this paper is to analyse transitivity choices in *The Story of an Hour*, and to study how the author perpetuates her ideology through the use of transitivity processes. Michael Halliday's (2014) transitivity system is used in order to determine the processes involved in the short story.

Theoretical Framework

Transitivity Choice and Feminist Stylistics

Transitivity analysis is a useful analytic model for literary texts as well as other types of discourse. Transitivity is related to the ideational function of language and transitivity choice reflects the speaker or the writer's mental image of the world and how he or she wishes to account for his or her internal and external experience. Mills (2005) included transitivity choices as one of the components of the analysis at the level of the phrase/sentence. The concept of transitivity system and transitivity analysis is indebted to Halliday (2014). Transitivity system deals with the representation of *who acts* and *who is acted upon*. It is this view of transitivity which is drawn upon to investigate how language and ideology are interrelated. Mills (2005) mentions that the systematic use of certain types of transitivity choice can help the readers distinguish between worldviews. In other words, transitivity choice provides a glimpse into the writer's experience of the world around them and how he or she wishes to encode it.

Transitivity System

One of the functions of language is to give an account of both inner and outer experience. The inner experience is the process of consciousness while the outer experience is the process of the external world (Halliday et al. 2014). According to Halliday et. al. (2014), the clause reflects on our experience of the endless variation and flow of events. It is the system of transitivity which "provides the lexicogrammatical resources for construing a quantum of change in the flow of events as a figure" (Halliday et al. 2014).

Transitivity system has six types of processes. The processes are –

1. material process
2. behavioural process
3. mental process
4. verbal process
5. relational process, and
6. existential process.

Halliday et. al. (2014) state that the English transitivity system has three main types of processes: material, mental and relational. Material process represents the outer aspect of experience and mental process the inner aspect. Relational process basically forms relations between one experience and another. Relational process can serve the purpose of either identifying or classifying. Other processes can be located at the boundaries of these three processes. Behavioural process, representing actions manifested by inner workings, lies on the borderline between material and mental processes. Verbal process lies on the borderline of mental and relational processes and can be understood as conveying ideas through speaking or saying. Lastly, existential process, concerned with existence, is located on the borderline between relational and material processes.

Material Process

Material process is the process of *doing* and *happening* and construes a change in the flow of events in the outer world. It includes physical and observable actions, activities, and events. A material clause can be probed by asking “What did (the subject) do?” or “What happened?” (Toolan 1998). In a material clause, at least one participant, the Actor, is involved. The Actor brings about a change in the course of event, leading to an outcome which is different from the initial stage of the event. The outcome may be extended to another participant, the Goal. The contrast between the role of the Actor and the Goal is illustrated in the following example.

My grandfather built this house.

My grandfather	built	this house.
Actor	Process	Goal

In addition to these two roles, there are a number of other participant roles: Scope, Recipient, Client, and Attribute.

Behavioural Process

Behavioural process is the process of physiological and psychological behaviour. It is the process of *doing* or *behaving*. Behavioural clauses are the least distinct processes as they have no clearly defined characteristics. A behavioural clause has one participant, the Behaver, which is typically a conscious being. If there is another participant the *behaviour* is directed at, that participant serves the role of the Phenomenon, like the Phenomenon of a mental clause. For example, in the following example, *She* is the behavior and *him* is the phenomenon whom the behaviour ‘smiling’ is directed at.

She smiles at him.

She	smiles at	him.
Behaver	Process	Phenomenon

Mental Process

Mental process is the process of *thinking*, *internal feeling* and *perceiving* (Toolan 1998). It is concerned with the experience of the world of our own consciousness and reflects the change in the flow of events in it. A mental clause is a clause of *sensing*. In mental processes, there is always one human or human-like participant, the Senser (Toolan 1998). There is also another

participant, the Phenomenon, which is felt, thought, wanted or perceived. The role of the Senser and the Phenomenon is distinguished in the following example.

The guests are pleased with the food.

The guests	are pleased with	the food.
Senser	Process	Phenomenon

Four different subtypes of sensing can be found in a mental clause: 'perceptive', 'cognitive', 'desiderative' and 'emotive', differing in terms of phenomenality, directionality, gradability, potentiality and ability to serve as metaphors of modality.

Verbal Process

Verbal process is the process of *communicating*. It communicates by expressing, reporting, saying, telling, etc. (Toolan 1998). It covers any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning. In a verbal clause, there is always one participant named the Sayer, typically human, that represents the role of the speaker. There can also be other participant functions: Receiver, Verbiage, and Target. The following example illustrates the roles involved in a verbal clause.

The teacher praised the student.

The teacher	praised	the student.
Sayer	Process	Target

Relational Process

Relational process is a process of *characterising* and *identifying*. English has six categories of relational clauses, formed by three main types of relation – 'intensive', 'possessive', and 'circumstantial', each of which has two distinct modes of being – 'attributive' and 'identifying'. Participant roles include Carrier and Attribute and Identified and Identifier. The contrast between the two pairs of participants is illustrated in the following examples.

(1) *John is kind.*

John	is	kind.
Carrier	relational process	Attribute

(2) *John is the kindest kid in the class.*

John	is	the kindest kid in the class.
Identified	relational process	Identifier

Existential Process

Existential process is a process of *existing* or *happening*. An existential clause is usually introduced by *There*, indicating that someone or something exists or has happened. The word *There* is neither a participant nor a circumstance. Its purpose is to indicate the feature of existence. The participant in an existential process is called the Existent, referring to an entity or an event being indicated as existing or happening. The role of the Existent is illustrated in the following sentence.

There is a book.

There	is	a book.
	existential process	Existent

Historical Context of *The Story of an Hour*

The Story of an Hour is one of Kate Chopin’s shortest and most widely read stories. The story was published at the time when the role of women in society was being questioned and fundamental rights for women were being advocated by first-wave feminism movements. First-wave feminism is a feminist movement that occurred throughout the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. As the world in the nineteenth century was rapidly changing due to the expansion of industrialisation, “a True Woman was expected to serve as the protectress of religion and civilized society” (Cruea 2005). Cruea (2005) mentioned that to become a True Woman, young girls were trained to be obedient and exhibit great self-control. A True Woman was assumed to be a pillar of moral strength and virtue, but at the same time, was also portrayed as frail and weak, prompting that she needed to be protected by a male family member. The role of women was clearly reflected in Mrs Sarah Ellis’s immensely successful *Women of England* (1839), *The Mothers of England* (1842) and *The Daughters of England* (1943). She described women as ‘relative creatures’, implying that a woman’s place in society can only be defined by their relation or connection to their parents, husbands and children (Gamble 2001).

Feminism was never a unified movement due to different political approaches taken by activists. Crucial movements of First-wave Feminism were ‘The Women’s Rights Movement’ and ‘Women’s Suffrage Movement’, which emphasised social, political and economic reform (Selden, Widdowson and Brooker 2015). One of the most significant figures of this period is Virginia Woolf. Woolf pointed out women’s material disadvantages compared to men. Although she recognised that gender identity is socially constructed and therefore, can be challenged and transformed, she did not frankly confront the conflict between male and female sexuality, and was later criticized by Elaine Showalter for her ‘elusive’ style (Selden, Widdowson and Brooker 2015).

The story took place at a time when women were not able to enjoy even the most fundamental rights. Moreover, married women were expected to fulfill their domestic roles of a dutiful wife and a devoted mother. They had little control over property or finance. Some women who were not content in these roles sought greater autonomy over their own life, leading to the emergence of feminist movements advocating for women’s rights.

Research Questions

This research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What types of processes are used in the short story *The Story of an Hour*?
2. How do transitivity choices in the story reflect ideology of the author?

Methodology

The material used for this research is the short story *The Story of an Hour* written by Kate Chopin, a prominent feminist writer of the 19th century. The story depicts the response of Louise Mallard when she heard the news of her husband’s death in a railroad accident. Seemingly devastated by the news at first, as the story continues, Louise starts to become aware of her ecstasy

over liberation from her marriage. Initially, *The Story of an Hour* was rejected by *Century* and *Vogue* magazines on the ground that the story is immoral. Chopin's portrayal of self-assertion in the story received criticism because during that period, the ideal of femininity is a selfless wife and mother, dependent on her husband and devoted to her family. With the success of *Bayou Folk*, Chopin's collection of short stories, *Vogue* magazine agreed to publish *The Story of an Hour* in 1894.

For data analysis, the clauses from the story were divided into dependent and independent clauses. The clauses were then put into a table according to the type of process involved in the clause. Afterwards, to observe agency given to human characters in the story, each clause was categorised into agent and agentless. Agent clauses were further grouped as animate, inanimate, and agent-like. Human and other living things were identified as animate agents and non-living things were identified as inanimate agents. Body parts which act as agent were called agent-like. Clauses that give no agency to any kind of agent were put into agentless category. The collected data were then examined to see how the ideology of feminism is integrated in the short story, especially in the portrayal of the main character. Finally, the effect of transitivity choices made by the author on the expression of feminist ideas was discussed.

Findings

According to transitivity system proposed by Halliday et. al (2014), there are six types of processes, namely, material process, behavioural process, mental process, verbal process, relational process, and existential process. Transitivity analysis was conducted on 89 dependent and independent clauses in the short story *The Story of an Hour*. The following chart illustrates percentages of the types of processes found in the collected clauses from the story.

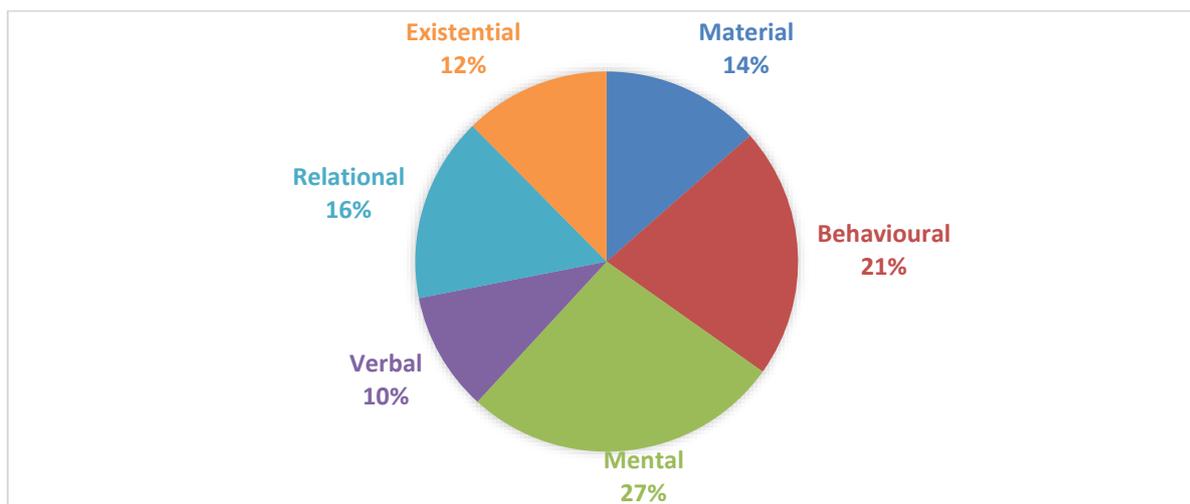


Figure 1. Percentages of the types of processes found in *The Story of an Hour*

All types of processes are used in the short story. The findings show that the use of mental process and behavioural process is significantly higher than the use of other types of processes. Out of 89 clauses, mental process makes up 27% (24 clauses) of the clauses, behavioural process 21% (19 clauses), relational process 16% (14 clauses), material process 14% (12 clauses), existential process 12% (11 clauses), and verbal process 10% (9 clauses).

To determine the extent of agency given to the characters, the collected clauses are then put into four different groups: animate agent, inanimate agent, agent-like, and agentless. The following chart illustrates percentages of each type of agency found in the story.

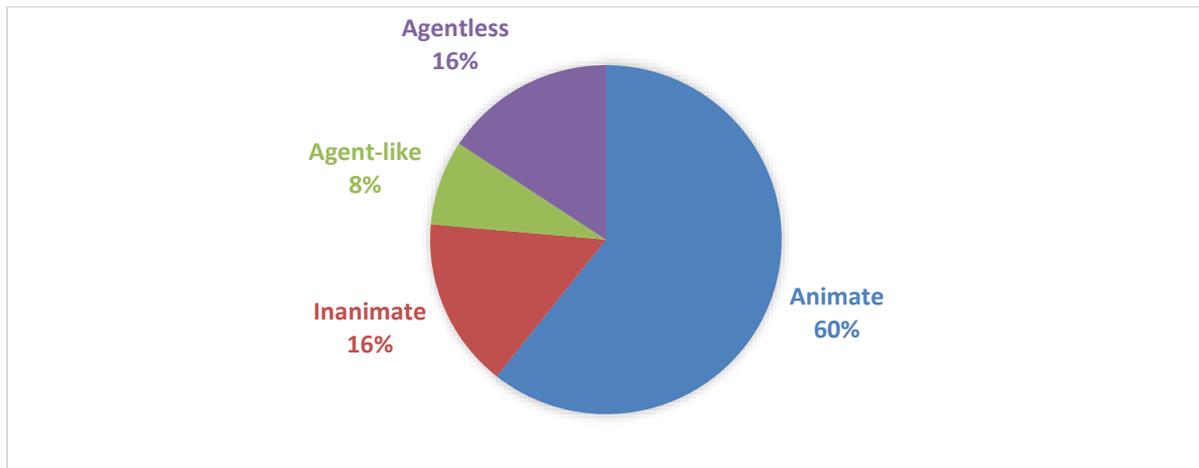


Figure 2. Percentages of agency found in *The Story of an Hour*

The data show that clauses with agent constitute 84% (75 clauses) of the collected clauses. Animate agent constitutes 60% (54 clauses), inanimate agent 16% (14 clauses), and agent-like agent 8% (7 clauses). Interestingly, the main character, Louise Mallard, is given agency in only 61% (33 clauses) of animate agent clauses. Out of 89 clauses, the remaining 16% (14 clauses) are agentless clauses. Although the number of agentless clauses is relatively fewer than clauses with agent, 16% is still a significant number.

To examine which processes give agency to whom, the data from Figure 1 and Figure 2 are compared in Table 1.

Table 1: Transitivity processes and agency given by each process

			Material	Behavioural	Mental	Verbal	Relational	Existential	Total
Agent	Animate	Louise Mallard	3	9	18	2	1	-	33
		Others	3	5	1	5	4	3	21
	Agent-like		1	4	-	-	2	-	7
	Inanimate		-	1	4	2	6	1	14
Agentless			5	-	1	-	1	7	14
Total			12	19	24	9	14	11	89

Comparison of the data reveals that agency of the main character is significantly higher in mental clauses, implying that most mental clauses are used to describe Louise Mallard’s thoughts and perception. Despite the abundant use of mental clauses, Louise is given agency in only 2 verbal clauses while other characters have more agency in verbal clauses. It should also be noted that expressions such as *She said it over and over under her breath: “free, free, free!”*, and *“Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering.* were used in these 2 verbal clauses. This indicates the outburst of her emotions which comes out involuntarily. As for agent-like agents, it is mostly used in behavioural clauses. Using agent-like agents in behavioural clauses makes the

behaviour of the human character seem involuntary, diminishing the agency of the character. Inanimate agents are mostly used for relational clauses. A number of existential clauses are also used to introduce a character, to describe the setting and to indicate Louise Mallard's emotional turmoil.

Discussion

The findings of transitivity analysis indicate that mental process, constituting 27% of all clauses, is the most dominant process used by Chopin in *The Story of an Hour*. Mental clause is used to represent happenings in inner consciousness of human beings. In the story, Chopin uses mental process mainly to show a glimpse of inner turmoil of Louise Mallard. Instead of using the narrator's voice directly to describe what Louise Mallard's marriage was like, Chopin lets the readers infer that information from Louise's reaction.

The first mental clause used in the story is *She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same*, which represents Louise's perception. It should be pointed out that this clause is also the first clause which has her as animate agent, but it does not give her full agency because its purpose is to show how she perceived the news. This clause is immediately followed by a behavioural clause, *She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms*, and a sentence made up of a mental clause, *When the storm of grief had spent itself*, and a material clause, *she went away to her room alone*. Out of all possible alternatives to say that Louise went to her room after crying her heart out, Chopin chooses to use 'the storm of grief' as the agent, giving agency to emotion and not the person herself.

A significant number of mental clauses are used throughout the story but only two notable clusters of mental clauses are found. Chopin uses the first cluster of mental clauses to describe an unnamed powerful emotion Louise gradually notices when she is finally in solitude. The readers are already informed that *...there was a dull stare in her eyes whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of these patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought*, and are aware that she is occupied with some thoughts. The author first uses an existential clause, *There was something coming to her*, followed by a mental clause, *she was waiting for it, fearfully* to divulge an information about the magnitude of what is occurring in Louise's inner consciousness. This sentence is followed by a few more mental clauses such as *She did not know, But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air, She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, she was striving to beat it back with her will – as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been*. This powerful emotion remains unnamed not only to heighten suspense but also to convey Louise's fear to acknowledge it. Seeing Louise's inner struggle, it can be inferred that she is used to suppressing her true feelings and does not dare to acknowledge it, let alone express it.

Chopin uses the second cluster of mental clauses after Louise has realised and embraced the newfound freedom. To show Louise's perception and attitude towards her new identity, the author employs a number of mental clauses such as *She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her, A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial, She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead, But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to*

her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome. The second cluster of mental clauses expresses Louise's emotions as she embraces the freedom that will belong to her in the future. As usual, Chopin lets the readers infer what marriage means to Louise by using mental clauses to describe her enormous joy.

In addition to these two instances, Chopin uses more mental clauses such as *she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window* and *Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her* to show the exhilaration of freedom Louise is experiencing at that moment. It should also be noted that most of the mental clauses used in the story is associated with the portrayal of Louise's mental state when she is alone with her thoughts. Mental process is effectively used to highlight the turbulent changes in the main character's mental state.

The second most dominant process, constituting 21% of all clauses, is behavioural process. Notably, clusters of behavioural clauses are used to describe Louise's initial reaction to the news of her husband's death and her reaction after acknowledging the freedom her new identity as a widow brings to her and to indicate the control she has over herself, knowing that she finally possesses self-assertion. Behavioural process sits somewhere between the material and the mental processes (Gibbons and Whiteley 2018) as it represents physiological and psychological behaviours. In the story, behavioural clauses are usually used together with mental clauses and material clauses.

Chopin uses the first behavioural clause, *She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms*, after the mental clause, *She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance*, which gives Louise limited agency. Afterwards, she retreats into her room alone. She *sank* into the chair in her room, *pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul*. The use of the behavioural clause *Into this she sank* allows readers to infer the intensity of her grief. Chopin makes use of a cluster of behavioural clauses to depict a woman mourning after being informed about the death of her husband. It is, in fact, the kind of reaction the readers expect to see.

However, the second cluster of behavioural clauses comes after an unexpected twist, Louise's verbalization of self-assertion. A cluster of mental clauses, *She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, she was striving to beat it back with her will..., when she abandoned herself*, is used to hint an unknown powerful emotion approaching her and verbal process, *a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips, She said it over and over...*, is used to reveal it. The impact of Louise's realization of her newfound freedom is conveyed through a number of behavioural clauses such as *The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes, They stayed keen and bright, Her pulses beat fast, the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body*. The use of behavioural clauses here is significant because the involuntary reaction of her body displays her raw and unfiltered emotion. By highlighting Louise's thrill to embrace her new identity, Chopin effectively highlights the contrast between a married woman and a widow.

Another cluster of behavioural clauses is used near the end of the story. These clauses are among the last clauses used by Chopin to give Louise Mallard agency. After realising what her husband's death means to her, Louise is daydreaming about her new life. However, because of her sister Josephine who keeps imploring her to come out, she *arose at length* to open the door. Two behavioural clauses, *she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory* and *she*

clasped her sister's waist, are used to show her behaviour. Chopin's choice of behavioural clauses for this part is important because unlike the beginning of the story where Louise does not have much control not only over her environment but also over her own mental state, these clauses show that she has finally gained control over herself.

Relational clauses, constituting 16% of all clauses, are also used significantly in the story. The purpose of relational process is to perform identifying and classifying functions (Gibbons & Whiteley, 2018). For identification purpose, Chopin uses predicated themes such as *It was her sister Josephine*, *It was he*, *It was only yesterday*, and *It was Brently Mallard*. By using predicated themes, the identified participants are more or less objectified, which has an impact on the agency given to the characters. Chopin also uses relational clauses to give 'attribute' to the main character. Chopin depicts the personality of Louise Mallard by using such clauses as *She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength* and *It (the dull stare in her eyes) was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought*. It should be noted that out of 14 relational clauses, only 3 clauses are used to give attribute to Louise Mallard. The author seems to be more interested in portraying the character through her attitude towards the liberation from her marriage.

The fourth most dominant process, constituting 14% of all clauses, is material process which is used to describe observable occurrences and activities in the outer world. As the story is told through Louise Mallard's reaction and emotion, only 12 material clauses are used in the story, most of which are found at the end of the story. In most parts of the story, Louise barely has control over her emotion. However, after realising and accepting her concealed desire to be free, she finally rejoices in her freedom. Together with a cluster of behavioural clauses, Chopin uses material clauses such as *(she) opened the door to her sister's importunities, together they descended the stairs* to indicate Louise's control over her life.

Next, the fifth most dominant process, making up 12% of all clauses, is existential process which represents the existence of someone or something or occurrence of something. In the story, Chopin uses existential process to describe the setting and to indicate an emotion. The author uses clauses such as *There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair, The delicious breath of rain was in the air, There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window* to describe the setting. Together with existential clauses, mental clauses, representing Louise's perception, are also used to describe the setting. As a result, the readers can feel the absentmindedness of the main character. Moreover, the author also uses clauses like *there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky* and *There was a feverish triumph in her eyes* to indicate Louise's emotion reflected in her eyes. By doing so, agency of Louise is effectively taken away because it implies that it is not her who is 'feeling' this emotion but the emotion that is 'occurring' to her.

Lastly, verbal process, constituting 10% of all clauses, is found to be the least used process in the story. However, the verbs chosen by Chopin provide insights into the main character's inner world. A powerful emotion Louise experiences is first hinted by using existential process, mental process, relational process and material process but the readers cannot put a name to it. Chopin chooses to use verbal clauses such as *a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips* and *She said it over and over under her breath: free, free, free!* to reveal the inner voice, effectively indicating the intensity of the character's emotion.

In order to fully understand how Chopin conveys her feminist ideology, agency given to (or taken away from) human characters should also be observed. The findings show that most clauses (60%) give agency to human characters. However, only 61% of animate agent clauses give agency to the main character, Louise Mallard. Despite being the main character, Louise is given agency in only a little over half of the animate agent clauses. On the other hand, agent-like clauses constitute 8% of the clauses used in the story. This implies that the author chooses to give limited agency to human characters.

From these data, it can be referred that although human characters are in control of what is happening around them or to them, they are not in complete control of the situation. It is especially true for Louise as the agency given to her is relatively insignificant than other 'agents'. She is, in fact, given control over herself only near the end of story, but even that power is taken abruptly and ultimately by death. Louise Mallard, despite being the main character of the story, is not given much agency when she interacts with other characters. An important thing to note is that even her identity is portrayed mainly through her relation to her husband. She is, in most part of the story, referred to as Mrs. Mallard. It is only when her sister, Josephine calls her name that Mrs. Mallard's name is revealed. Her maiden name is not even mentioned by the narrator. By diminishing her agency and weakening her identity, Chopin uses Louise Mallard to reflect the weakened identity of married women during her time.

Inanimate agent clauses make up 16% and agentless clauses make up 16% of the clauses. The number of clauses which does not have animate or agent-like agent is rather significant. The author's decision to take away agency from human characters indicates that human characters have limited control. Analysis of transitivity processes used in the story and the limited agency given to human characters provide interesting insights to the author's ideology concerning the life of married women.

Chopin does not explicitly describe what marriage life was like for Louise Mallard nor what makes her feel that she is finally free. It is only vaguely described that there was *powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature*. Louise Mallard's inability to control her emotion and her short-lived control over herself implies repression faced by married women in the nineteenth century.

To fully understand the constraints Louise Mallard is facing, it is important to consider the background information of what married women's life was like in the nineteenth century, the time the story was written in. William Thompson recognised that "even women whom society treated as fortunate and settled were privately suffering from unacknowledged needs and repressive treatment from men" in *Appeal of One-Half of the Human Race, Women, against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men* (1825). Women of the nineteenth century were deprived of legal rights, such as the rights to vote, the rights to own real property, or the custody of children. Unmarried ladies had to depend on male family members, and were trained to fulfill domestic roles and to become good wives and mothers. Married women had little autonomy within marriage. Decisions were typically made by their husbands, and society also confined women to domestic spaces. They could not participate in public life, politics, and professions. As John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) argues, "society has traditionally oppressed women and treated them as slaves" (Gamble 2001).

Through the eyes and views of a character, an author's ideology can be detected to an extent. In *The Story of an Hour*, Chopin's view and perspective on married life can be traced through the analysis of transitivity choices made in the short story. Chopin's ideology concerning the life of married women is reflected through diction, portrayal of characters, and agency given to the main character. Transitivity analysis reveals that Chopin intends to portray Louise Mallard as passive to her marriage and her husband's will and as longing for freedom from her marriage.

Conclusion

Transitivity analysis of *The Story of an Hour* by Kate Chopin proves that language can reveal the ideology of the writer. According to Halliday's (2014) system of transitivity, there are six types of processes: material, behavioural, mental, verbal, relational, and existential. Dependent and independent clauses in the short story are analysed and categorised based on these processes. The analysis of the clauses indicates that the author mainly focuses on the change of events in the main character's inner world of consciousness and its reflection and manifestation in her behaviour. Agency of the main character is also diminished in her interaction with other characters and is given back to her only when she is alone, dealing with her inner consciousness. The life of married women is not explicitly portrayed in the story, but from the response of Louise Mallard towards his husband's sudden death, and her initial struggle to restrain the joy she is feeling indicates that the main character is confined in her marriage and has always been seeking to be liberated from it. Moreover, she seems to be used to suppressing her true emotions which are against the values of an ideal woman. Louise Mallard's behaviour, reaction to her husband's death, and her emotional outburst reflect not only the constraint on married women's life but also the ideology of the author herself.

This study hopes to draw attention to the feminist ideology expressed in literary texts based on the study of ideational function. Additionally, analysis of textual and interpersonal choices can reveal whether the character is in a passive circumstance or in control of his or her environment.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude towards Professor Dr. Tin Maung Tun, Rector, University of Yangon, Professor Dr. Thidar Aye, Professor Dr. Khin Chit Chit, Professor, Dr. Cho Cho, Pro-rectors of University of Yangon for their kind permission and encouragement to conduct this study. Secondly, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Professor Dr. Thi Thi Tun, Head of Department of English, University of Yangon, for her guidance. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Su Khine Oo, Professor of Department of English, University of Yangon, for her suggestions. Next, my special thanks go to my friends and colleagues who helped me to complete this research. Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation to my family who encouraged and supported me to complete this research.

References

- Burke, Michael. 2014. *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Cruea, Susan M... 2005. "Changing Ideals of Womanhood During the Nineteenth-Century Woman Movement." *University Writing Program Faculty Publications*, 187-204.
- Gamble, Sarah. 2001. *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Post feminism*. London: Routledge.
- Gibbons, Alison, and Sara Whiteley. 2018. *Contemporary Stylistics: Language, Cognition, Interpretation*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Halliday, Michael Alexander Kirkwood. 1985. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 1st edition. London: E. Arnold.
- Halliday, Michael Alexander Kirkwood, and Christian Matthias Ingemar Martin Matthiessen. 2014. *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Fourth Edition. London: Routledge.
- Mills, Sara. 2005. *Feminist Stylistics*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis.
- Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker. 2015. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 5th Edition. London: Routledge.
- Toolan, Michael. 1998. *Language in Literature: An Introduction to Stylistics*. 1st Edition. London: Routledge.