Exploring character delineation:
A transitivity analysis of O. Henry's
"A Retrieved Reformation"

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Abstract

This paper attempts to show how language works in literature in order to explore character delineation by using the transitivity system, which was initially proposed by Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 2014). Specifically, it aims to construe the linguistic choices in O. Henry's "A Retrieved Reformation," which highlights the protagonist's life reformation brought by love, family, and social acceptance. Results show that the text has 309 transitivity processes, with material as the dominant process type which emphasizes much of the character's actions and events. Among the participant roles, the actor role is the most dominant, which means that the role of the character is to bring changes in his current situations, leading to reformation. Meanwhile, location is the most dominant type of circumstances. An in-depth analysis using the transitivity system unveils the writer's perspective in manipulating story elements, especially character. The paper further proves that literature can be taught using linguistic approaches.

Keywords: "A Retrieved Reformation," O. Henry, stylistic analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, transitivity analysis

1. Introduction

Language meaning can be justified if its intended effect is achieved by interlocutors. In fact, human interaction occurs to give birth to communicative meaning. Although language has multifaceted features—from structure to sound, and to the meaning of a single word, it maintains its end-goal to provide people with lexico-grammatical choices to create meaning, intended or implied (Fawcett, 2000, as cited in Zahoor & Janjua, 2016). Bloor and Bloor (2004) affirm that in using language, people try to produce or construct meaning. Kroger and Wood (2000) assert that language does not only describe things but also serves as a medium for people to understand one another. In addition, Gee (2005) believes that language

"has a magical property" that people use, in spoken and written discourse, according to the conditions of a situation (p. 11). In fact, when a person speaks and writes, he or she "creates that very situation" (p. 11). In other words, language determines one's identity, values, beliefs, and, most likely, ideology (Nguyen, 2012). The study of language as an integral component of socialization has been emphasized by Fairclough (1989) who states that using language is the most common form of social behavior in both public and private interactions. It can also determine one's social relationships with other individuals and social institutions.

When language is used, it is not used by accident; rather, everything is put in place in order to do its functions (Halliday, 1994, as cited in Nguyen, 2012). The grammatical choice of a participant explains how experiences are constructed (Nguyen, 2012). Most likely, prominence in language is used to describe the ideological slant, perceived realities, and beliefs of participants (Darani, 2014). Halliday and his associates developed the Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) or the so-called 'multifunctional principle' (Fawcett, 2000) in the late 1950s and early 1960s. SFL, proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), has various ways to analyze a text in order to have a well-structured architecture of language (Farhat, 2016). Transitivity, as one of these ways, can reveal the relationship between words and meanings through the analysis of process types, participant roles, and circumstances (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The richness of language is construed as grammar that is used to convey a person's experience, which involves actions and events, and even thoughts, reactions, perceptions, and emotions (Simpson, 2005).

Iwamoto (1995) further states that the key part of transitivity is concerned with the transfer of ideas; the representation of patterns of experience or in the broadcast sense, process, which typically includes actions or events of consciousness and relation. Halliday (1985, as cited in Iwamoto, 1995) points to the factors involved in the semanticization of processes in the clause, as follows:

(1)   the process itself, which is expressed by the verb phrase in a clause,
(2)   the participants in the clause, which is normally realized by the noun phrases in the clauses; and
(3)   the circumstances associated with the process, which are typically expressed by adverbial phrases or prepositional phrases. (p. 65)

Unlike traditional grammar that simply identifies verbs to take direct objects, transitivity explains the 'whys' of using one structure or one word over others as preferred by the author (Simpson, 2004). This grammatical facility, according to Simpson (2004), captures the experience or the 'going' of characters in stories. It is proven to be the most accurate stylistics tool that configures the experiential functions of language. For example, Mwinlaaru's (2012) study used six characters of Chinua Achebe's novel *Anthills of the Savannah* in order to reveal the character's attitude, specifically the protagonist Sam who was identified as a leader with will power, based on the number of material processes identified. Another study conducted by Nyuyen (2012) revealed the personality of the main character in the story "Heroic Mother" by Hoa Pham. The results showed that relational, behavioral, and

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mental processes outnumbered material process, which would mean that the heroic mother's fragility and old age constituted her limited roles at home and in society. In other words, she expressed her thoughts well, but she could not make her thoughts work. Hence, through linguistic analysis, the text could be accurately interpreted and could reflect the societal implication of the story theme. Likewise, Sun's (2011) study used transitivity in order to assess the inner and outer representation of reality of the protagonist. In the short story "The Theft," the main character has been identified as a person with violent mental thinking that seems contrary to her peaceful appearance. The mental process outnumbered the material process as the protagonist demonstrates more mental activities than outward actions.

Furthermore, transitivity can be used to analyze a character's experience of the real world, including the inner world of his or her own consciousness (Halliday, 1970, as cited in Darani, 2014). Likewise, Valeriano and Lintao (2016) confirm that transitivity reveals a participant's "external world of the senses and the internal world of the mind" (p. 55). Transitivity as a system is a breakthrough in the field of linguistics, which can be used in analyzing both literary and nonliterary texts. For instance, Valeriano and Lintao (2016) compared editorials published by the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* and *The Washington Post.* It was found that Americans' linguistic choices reveal their objective expressions toward people and events, while Filipinos focus on pinpointing people who are responsible for some irregularities in the government. Hence, it is through transitivity that even writers' cultural identities could be examined and revealed.

On the contrary, Wang (2015) believes that transitivity, based on the traditional view of grammar, does not reveal the meaning of a sentence and may result in problematic analysis because of the mixing of semantic and syntactic features of clauses. Despite this finding, Wang concludes that transitivity, based on the cognitive view, is a promising approach that would reveal a participant's cognitive ability based on language functions.

Transitivity has been proved to be a reliable and an effective tool for analyzing both literary and nonliterary forms. Through this, the link between literature and linguistics could be established. This study hopes to contribute to the idea that understanding a literary text could best work with linguistic analysis. Hence, with reference to transitivity analysis, this paper uncovers a character's roles and efforts toward achieving reformation in the story "A Retrieved Reformation" by O. Henry.

1.1   Research Questions

Generally, this paper aimed to construe the linguistic choices of O. Henry in his short story "A Retrieved Reformation," which constructs the protagonist's life reformation brought by love, family, and social acceptance. Specifically, this study aimed to:

1.   identify the types of process, based on the transitivity system, used in the story; and
2.   describe participant roles and circumstances in shaping the idea of life reformation in the said story.

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1.2 Theoretical Framework

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 2014) call one of the functions of language as ideational, which is used to describe a person's experience and personality in relation to society. Ideational is expressed through transitivity analysis, which involves the determination of process types and participants in order to describe the encoding of experiences of participants.

Specifically, this paper is anchored on Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) transitivity system, which includes six types of process used to describe the main character's experiences in the story analyzed. Each clause in the story was analyzed according to the following process types:

(a) **Material Process**. It is a type of process that allows the actor to bring changes in an event or situation. It describes the 'doing' of the character in the story leading to an outcome or goal. The occurrences of the material process may mean that the character has dynamic interactions in the story.

(b) **Mental Process**. It is an action done using human senses such as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling. Some examples are *like* or *dislike*, *think*, *understand*, *know*, *believe* or *disbelieve*, *hate*, and *trust*. A character in the story may play the role of a senser, while a character in the object position has the role of phenomenon. The dominant use of the mental process indicates a character's consciousness of the world through cognitive, perceptual, and emotional expressions.

(c) **Relational Process**. It describes the inner and outer experiences of a character by drawing upon the relationship that exists between two isolated entities. It is usually in the form of verb 'to be.' The participant as the entity being described is called 'carrier,' while 'attribute' is the description given to it. The principal types are: (1) intensive means 'x is a,' e.g., Sarah is wise. Sarah is the leader. The leader is Sarah; (2) possessive means 'x has a,' e.g., Peter has a piano; and (3) circumstantial means 'x is at,' e.g., The fair is on a Tuesday; tomorrow is the 10th (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004, p. 216). The occurrences of the relational process model the experiences of 'being' rather than sensing and doing. The nature of unfolding becomes static rather than dynamic.

(d) **Behavioral Process**. This process describes a character's behavior, and physiological and psychological activities. According to Alam (2017), behavioral processes are in between material and mental processes, "a kind of material and a kind of mental" (p. 47). Usually, these verbs include the act of breathing, coughing, smiling, dreaming and staring" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 248). Behaver is said

to be the only one participant in this process. The occurrences of this process indicate a character's natural and conscious reactions toward situations with resemblance to real human beings' inner and outer views of reality.

(e)　**Verbal Process**. This is the action of saying where the participant in the subject position is the sayer who says something, and something which is being said is the verbiage and to whom it is said is the receiver. This process type follows the model "'x said, then y said' together with quotes of what was said" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 252). The occurrences of this process suggest that the character is a conscious being. This also denotes the author's purpose of attributing the main source of information.

(f)　**Existential Process**. It is represented through verbs that express something; conventionally, it conveys an existential functioning as an 'existent' (Alam, 2017). To express existence, 'there' and 'here' in clauses are not considered participant and circumstance. Both words have no functions, but they indicate that there is a feature of existence; however, this process type makes a character's role less powerful and inactive.

The six types of process are shown in Table 1. Additionally, circumstances were also identified. Circumstances are secondary details that support the processes such as "time (temporal), place (spatial), manner (means, quality, and comparison), cause (reason and purpose), accompaniment, matter, and role" (Pramono, 2014, p. 22).

Table 1
Summary of the six types of process based on Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) transitivity system

Type of Process	Category Meaning	Participant
Material:	'doing'	Actor, Goal
Action	'doing'	
Event	'happening'	
Mental:	'sensing'	
Perception	'seeing'	Senser, Phenomenon
Affection	'feeling'	
Cognition	'thinking'	
Relational	'being'	Carrier, Attribute, Token, Value, Identified
Attribution	'attributing'	
Identification	'identifying'	

Table 1 continued...

Type of Process	Category Meaning	Participant
Behavioral	'behaving'	Behaver
Verbal	'saying'	Sayer, Target
Existential	'existing'	Existent

According to Valeriano and Lintao (2016), the occurrences of the above listed process types have implications for text analysis. In this paper, transitivity system was used to explore the main character's roles toward achieving life reformation.

2. Method

The descriptive method was employed in order to explore the main character's life reformation in O. Henry's short story "A Retrieved Reformation." Descriptive qualitative research, according to Cresswell (2003), is used to identify the attributes of a subject in a specific phenomenon. With reference to this, the experiential functions of the protagonist and other characters were revealed through the use of descriptive measures such as frequency counts and percentages.

For the clausal analysis, each clause written in the story was encoded in MS Word and was then given a number code for categorization of process types, participant roles, and circumstances.

Using the functional grammatical analysis method, specifically the transitivity method of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), clause constituents were identified considering the type of process (verbal phrase) used in each clause. These process types, i.e., material, relational, mental, verbal, behavioral, and existential, were carefully and manually counted accordingly. The total number of process types in each clause was determined by using the MS Excel spreadsheet.

Frequency counts and percentages were used to show the distribution of process types, participant roles, and circumstances. Data were summed up through a table of frequency of transitivity clause types (see Table 1). The results of the 44-page analysis, which garnered 209 clauses, were validated by an intercoder who holds a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. In cases where differences occurred in the intercoding, both the researchers and the intercoder reanalyzed the questionable data until they reached an agreement as regards the data analysis and interpretation.

Specifically, clauses were analyzed using the following steps: (a) reading the short story; (b) segmenting the data into clauses; (c) identifying the data in the form of clauses; (d) classifying the clauses into categories of transitivity process types, participant roles, and circumstances; and (e) editing and validation of the intercoder.

The following extract shows a sample analysis:

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Mr. Spenser thought he would stop over in the town a few days and look over the situation.

Mr. Spenser	*thought*	*he*	*would stop over*	*in the town a few days*	*and*	*look over*	*the situation.*
Senser	Mental	Actor	Material	Circ: Location		Mental	Phenomenon

The example above is considered one clause with two types of processes such as material (*would stop*) and mental (*thought and look over*). These process types were manually categorized and counted to garner the occurrences of process types. Meanwhile, the mental process has a participant role called senser (*Mr. Spenser*), while the material process has a participant role called actor (*he*). In the sample clause, circumstance was categorized as location.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Types of Process Used

The story "A Retrieved Reformation," published in 1903, was written by O. Henry. Generally, it describes the protagonist's (Jimmy Valentine) reformation as an ex-convict who has served at least ten months, which is far shorter from the original four-year sentence. In the beginning, he had not shown any desire to live a new life, but his sudden change occurred when he met Annabel Adams, a banker's daughter with whom he has fallen in love. To begin the so-called new life, he moves to Elmore, Arkansas by using the identity of a shoemaker, Ralph D. Spenser. He has eventually reformed his life with Adams by leaving his past.

Table 2
Frequency and percentage distributions of processes used by major, minor, and inanimate participants of the story

Participant	Material	Relational	Mental	Verbal	Behavioral	Existential	Total
Major Characters	122	15	27	22	13	3	202
Minor Characters	37	4	4	4	7	0	56
Inanimate Objects	19	25	2	2	3	0	51
Total	**178 (57.61%)**	**44 (14.24%)**	**33 (10.68%)**	**28 (9.06%)**	**23 (7.44%)**	**3 (0.97%)**	**309 (100%)**

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The major participants consist of *Jimmy Valentine/Ralph D. Spencer*, *Ben Price*, *Mike Dolan*, *Mr. Adams*, and *Annabel Adams*. The protagonist, Jimmy Valentine/Ralph D. Spenser, registers the highest number of transitivity clauses such as the following: *took it* (his pardon)*, went* (*to the café of one Mike Dolan*)*, shook* (*hands with Mike*)*, got his key and went upstairs,* and *carried* (*his dusted and cleaned suitcase in his hand*), among others. This finding runs parallel with the study of Manggala (2017) stating that characteristics of participants, especially the protagonist, are highly supported by the participants' actions, decisions, and undertakings, which are linguistically evident. In the transitivity analysis of Phuoc's "The Story of Tam and Cam," material processes, along with other processes, strongly conveyed meanings, which created the participants' characterization.

Table 2 further shows the minor characters that include *Agatha*, *May*, *the warden*, *the clerk*, and *the guard*. Some of the inanimate objects or nonhuman participants are *Annabel's pride*, *the losses*, *an old-fashioned bank safe*, *two weeks*, *five-dollar bill*, *three hours*, *his suitcase*, *business*, *the law*, *this statement*, and the like. It should be noted that minor characters have limited actions and participation in the story with 56 instances out of 309 processes.

Overall, Table 2 shows that the material process has the highest frequency and percentage (178; 57.61%) followed by the relational process garnering second highest frequency (44; 14.24%), mental process (33; 10.68%), verbal process (28; 9.06%), behavioral process (23; 7.44%), and existential process (3; 0.97%). It is worth noting that the writer used a variety of process types; however, it is not surprising to note that material would always be the dominant process type because it captures the fundamental existence of human beings (Hu, 1994, as cited in Valeriano & Lintao, 2016).

Some examples of transitivity processes in the story are presented below.

(a) **Material Process:** He (*Actor*) opened (*Material*) a shoe-store (*Goal*) and secured (*Material*) a good run of trade (*Goal*).

(b) **Relational Process:** You (*Carrier*) are (*Relational*) not a bad fellow (*Attribute*) at heart.

(c) **Mental Process:** Yes, I (*Senser*) guess (*Mental*) I (*Senser*) want (*Mental*) Mr. Valentine.

(d) **Verbal Process:** "Lot of nicket-plated shoe-horns in there," said (*Verbal*) Jimmy (*Sayer*) cooly that I'm going to return.

(e) **Behavioral Process:** Oh no, laughed (*Behavioral*) the warden (*Behaver*).

(f) **Existential Process:** There (*Carrier*) on the floor was (*Existential*) still Ben Price's collar bottoms (*Identified*).

The succeeding part of this paper specifically discusses how each process type is exemplified and analyzed in order to explore the main character's movements in the story toward his reformation achievement.

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Material Process

Eggins (2004) defines material process as a means of doing related to physical and tangible actions that can be done by an entity or some entities to another entity or other entities. In the text analyzed, this process has the highest frequency of 178 (57.61%); 122 for the major participants, 37 for the minor participants, and 19 for the inanimate objects. Among the verbs noted were:

> *wrote, make, gave, fix, unlock, brace up, tossed, opened, had served, handed in, took, buy, set, shook, carried, take, secured, accomplished, picked up, stuffed, pulled up, set, threw back, put on, investigated, colored, declared*

These verbs show a series of critical actions shown by the protagonist, Jimmy Valentine/Ralph D. Spencer. His interactions with other characters were contributory in building the process of unexpected reformation. While the protagonist has shown a dominant role in the material process, the first part of the story highlights the power of the prison officers who served as instruments in initiating such reformation, such as: *a guard … escorted him to the front office* and *warden handed Jimmy his pardon.* Furthermore, government support has been extended to give way to a reformed life, which appears in the following statements: *The clerk handed him a railroad ticket and the five-dollar bill.* and *The warden gave him a cigar, and shook hands.*

On the contrary, Jimmy has never even thought of reforming life even after his release. Indeed, his manner of accepting the state's pardon was quite passive, i.e., *Jimmy took it in a tired kind of way.,* with his latter statement of denying his crime: *I never cracked a safe in my life.* Initially, his character did not show any positive desire to entertain even a single idea of living a new life.

True enough, Jimmy proved that his few months of stay in prison did not rehabilitate him to change his old habit. In fact, right after he reached his old place, he immediately *got his key*, which he needed to inspect important tools that he used before in bank robberies. This act is clearly exemplified by the following extracts:

> *Jimmy slid back a panel in the wall and dragged out a dust-covered suit-case. He opened this and gazed fondly at the finest set of burglar's tools in the East.*

These initial steps of going back to his old profession continued with as *Jimmy went downstairs and through the cafe… and carried his dusted and cleaned suit-case in his hand.* These were supported by the series of bank robberies in some major cities, which are all connected to Jimmy's known method of burglary from the investigation of Ben Price (i.e., *Ben Price investigated the scenes of the robberies.*).

Reaching Elmore, he introduced himself as Ralph D. Spencer, a businessman. It all started when *Jimmy collared a boy that was loafing on the steps of the bank as if he were one of the stockholders, and began to ask him questions about the town, feeding him dimes*

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at intervals. All his plans changed when he met Annabel Adams, the daughter of the banker, Mr. Adams. This marked the beginning of his unexpected reformation; from admiration to that lady, he remained in that place and *he opened a shoe-store and secured a good run of trade* where he *made many friends* and *he accomplished the wish of his heart*. These swift occurrences in his life affirmed that his decision to change was moved by someone in the presence of a young lady appearing to be the *wish of his heart*.

With the success of his business along with his initial realization of a reformed life, his decision of finally ending his engagement with robbery and related acts became evident when he wrote a letter to a friend, *Jimmy wrote this letter.*, expressing his serious attempt to completely start a newborn life as he was about to marry Annabel. His willingness toward conversion was intensified by the pleasant acceptance of Adams family (*Jimmy took breakfast at the Adamses.*) that motivated Jimmy Valentine/Ralph D. Spencer to open another phase of life away from his dark past.

However, Jimmy proved that reforming lives would not always be easy because of some incidents which brought his life to his past. Worst among those incidents was when Agatha, Annabel's niece, accidently locked the door of the new vault of their bank. Under hysterical condition, Annabel asked the help of Jimmy which he could not refuse. Asking for the flower on her head, he responded without any hesitation showing his selfless love and pure submission to the request of the woman whom reformation can be attributed. That moment, Ralph D. Spenser unconsciously turned into Jimmy Valentine by skillfully opening the door in merely a few minutes in the presence of several people. This incident proved his sincerity, honesty, and courage to articulate a very strong message that the real state of reformation is disclosing the real self in the presence of those people whom he loved. Witnessing the incident, Ben Price, who is considered to be the epitome of moral action and dedication to one's work, pretended not to recognize Jimmy, which signals his acknowledgment of Jimmy's authentic act of reformation. Jimmy's character is shaped by the following verb phrases: *stuffed* it, *threw off* his coat, *pulled up* his shirt-sleeves, *set* his suitcase, *opened* (the suitcase), *put on* his coat, *threw back* the bolts, *opened* the door, and *walked* outside.

As shown in the material clauses exemplified above, Jimmy's situation in the external world entails his exertion of a considerable amount of force that leads him to a reformed life. The high frequency of material processes, specifically the action verbs, would suggest that Jimmy would like to bring changes in his external world through his true reformation.

Relational Process

Relational process, with 44 frequencies (14.24%), ranked second among the transitivity processes. The following verbs were commonly used: *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *isn't*, *weren't*, *be*, *wasn't*, and *had*. Relational process is a way to express *being*. The way to express it can be in attributive or identifying process (Eggins, 2004; Hemas & Ariyanti, 2016). It appears that most of the relational processes were carried out by inanimate objects as carrier (25 out of 44) such as *it*, which is repeatedly used to refer to various objects like *suitcase*, *life*, and *vault*; others include *business*, *pet drill*, *dollars*, *safe*, and *shoe-store*. However, the dominant presence of inanimate objects as carriers in the text has been very helpful in creating the character of

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Jimmy Valentine, such as the description of his house emphasizing *everything was just as he had left it* that highlights the suitcase as *[it was] a complete set, made of specially tempered steel…*, which supports his role as a bank robber even if he denied it saying *I never was in Springfield in my life!* when the warden tried to recall his previous crime. Indeed, in merely a matter of two weeks after his release, a series of bank robberies happened in various places such as Richmond, Indiana, and Jefferson City, where only *a scant eight hundred dollars was all that was secured*. The *remarkable similarity in the methods of the burglaries was noticed* by Ben Price pointing to Jimmy because of his notable style and method.

Even during the time Jimmy realized the need to renew his life, several carriers could not help but bring him to his past, especially when Annabel described his suitcase by saying: *Feels like it was full of gold bricks.* The weight of the suitcase reflects the heaviness of Jimmy's past that can hardly be hidden. This was further provoked when the new vault of the bank was presented by Mr. Adams: *the vault was a small one, but it had a new, patented door*. In that very moment, Jimmy struggled to forget those unpleasant occurrences in his life. In the end, he succeeded as *his shoe-store was flourishing, … but more than the success of his business is the newly found love through Annabel whom Ralph called* [she is] *an angel and her family* as *he was as much at home in the family of Mr. Adams and that of Annabel's married sister as if he were already a member… for Mr. Adams's future son-in-law was welcome anywhere*.—true to what he said, i.e., *It's the only life…the straight one.*, which proves his strong response and conviction that the genuine meaning and value of life is living away from his sinful past. Hence, his realization was expressed and his reformation was signaled by righteousness and nothing else.

Mental Process

As indicated in Table 2, a number of mental processes have been noted with 33 (10.68%) instances. The mental process appears to be less frequent than the relational process because the plot of the story highlights the physical actions of characters, both living and nonliving participants, and their significant relationship with each other. Mental process needs two participants, i.e., the senser and the phenomenon (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). This process type is related to someone's inner experience. It is assumed that people do not necessarily tell and share about their experiences through what they do, but such can also be expressed through their thoughts and feelings (Eggins, 2004; Hemas & Ariyanti, 2016). In the story, the mental verbs include *see*, *don't understand*, *thought*, *look over*, *believes*, *found out*, *wanted*, *don't know*, *seems*, *looked*, *heard*, *know*, *perceived*, *forgot*, and the like. These mental processes aid in understanding the protagonist's mental interaction with or consciousness of his environment (Downing & Locke, 2006, as cited in Isti'anah, 2014.)

The protagonist, after being convicted, verified his desire to continue his old life through his statements and decisions. His frustration was seen in the very beginning of the story when he had received a pardon after a nearly ten-month service from the original ten-year sentence; however, *he had expected to stay only about three months, at the longest* because of his supposed connection to lots of people, which appear in the clause: w*hen a man with as many friends on the outside as Jimmy had is received in the "stir" it is hardly*

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worthwhile to cut his hair.

However, his desire to continue his 'bank job' has shown him opportunities to live anew when he unintentionally met other characters who were influential for him to realize the beauty of a good life. As evidence, the content of a letter to an old friend deepened the character of Jimmy Valentine/Ralph D. Spencer. Reformation was highly affirmed in the following statements from the said letter:

> *I want you to be at Sullivan's place, in Little Rock, next Wednesday night, at nine o'clock. I want you to wind up some little matters for me. And, also, I want to make you a present of my kit of tools. I know you'll be glad to get them--you couldn't duplicate the lot for a thousand dollars. Say, Billy, I've quit the old business--a year ago.. She believes in me; and I wouldn't do another crooked thing for the whole world. Be sure to be at Sully's, for I must see you…*

Through this letter, the protagonist established a sincere and revolutionary decision to concretize changes in his life. The occurrences of the mental process *want*, which has an element of no emotion (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), suggests that Jimmy as a male character could express directly the practicality of his decisions without reservations. This finding is likely confirmed by Qasim, Talaat, Khushi, & Azher (2018) emphasizing that men have conscious thoughts and would arrive at practical decisions affecting public matters. The mental processes (e.g., *want*, *know*, *see*) in the letter suggest that the protagonist's psychological state has effectively and powerfully communicated the message to arrive at a reformed life. This result affirms that mental clauses could describe the internal world of a character, which reinforces the change in his or her external world.

Verbal Process

Verbal process, as shown in Table 2, has only 28 (9.06%) instances in the story. These verbs include *said*, which was used several times in quoted statements uttered by characters. Likewise, *told*, *called*, *said*, *commanded*, and *asked* were used in exemplifying the verbal process type. Between mental and relational processes are verbal processes that represent the art of saying and its synonym. Usually, three participants are involved in verbal processes: the sayer, which is responsible for the verbal process; the receiver, the person to whom the verbal process is directed; and the verbiage, the nominated statement of the verbal process (Halliday, 2004, 2014; Mehmood, Amber, Ameer, & Faiz, 2014).

Some of Jimmy's few verbal participation include his denial of his previous crime when he said that he has *never cracked any safe* in his entire life as he has *never been in Springfield*, a place of the robbery incident. His pretentious life continued when he defended his heavy suitcase as having *lot of nickel-plated shoe-horns in there*, in response to Annabel's reaction to its weight. His character was disclosed when the incident in Elmore Bank happened involving Agatha. His dilemma and silence were broken by Annabel's appeal to save the little girl (*give me that rose you are wearing*). After opening the vault, he left the

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place noticing the dedicated investigator, Ben Price. His greetings and statement indicate his surrender to finally witnessing such skills, *Got around at last, have you? Well, let's go. I don't know that it makes much difference, now.* These statements expressed his honest and humble acceptance of his misconduct; in fact, he directly surrendered himself to the authority in the presence of Ben Price. But the latter pretended he knew Jimmy because of he has sincerely shown the spirit of a reformed man.

In the story, the verbal process appears to be among the least used in terms of frequency. Although the protagonist has verbal usage in the text, it establishes the character of Jimmy/Ralph minimally as compared with other characters. The limited occurrences of the verbal process suggest that the revelation of the character should come from himself as the actual source of information.

Showing how Jimmy manifested his character as a doer more than a speaker is another major point of discussion. The typical aspect of masculinity on his part has been proved: 'to act more than to speak.' Again, Hemas and Ariyanti (2016) cited Eggins (2004) by defining verbal process as a process of verbal action where three participants are involved: sayer, receiver, and verbiage. The receiver is the one to whom the process is directed; while verbiage is something delivered, which is in the form of noun.

Behavioral and Existential Processes

There were 23 (7.44%) instances of behavioral processes in the story, which include *laughed*, *turned*, *collapsed*, *acted*, *looked*, and the like. With the participant's natural awareness toward the reality of human being, these processes tend to describe natural conscious reactions, which are executed by characters in the story. Behavioral clauses are near-verbal, -mental, and -material; thus, clauses containing these processes are difficult to determine (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In the text, a few behavioral verbs were used, but most of them were associated to the protagonist. Hence, these processes could not serve the delineation of the protagonist's character that much as compared with other processes.

Existential processes were the least frequent, with three (0.97%) occurrences. This process type was expressed through the use of *was*. Accordingly, existential processes represent experience by positioning that there 'was/is something.' Considering these processes appeared in the story, they turn out not to be a very strong point to establish the characters and their relation to one another. Eggins (2004) admits that this process can be identified with the use of the word 'there,' while the process can be indicated by the use of the verb 'be.' In the text, this kind of process does not show its powerful role in shaping the character of the protagonist and his goal. An example of existential process (carrier) is: *there on the floor was still Ben Price's collar-button*, which is linked to the time when Jimmy was arrested. The same bank robbery incidents proved his strong determination to continue the same job a few weeks after his release when *there was a neat job of safe-burglary done in Richmond, Indiana*. With the use of the existential process, the agency or the doer of the action was not cited. In support of this, the existential process type could be used to maintain objectivity of statement and to hide the doer of the action in order to focus on the action done (Valeriano & Lintao, 2016).

Finally, the moment of revelation about Jimmy was triggered when *there was a scream or two from the women, and a commotion*, which signals his dilemma: to ignore the incident and to continue living as Ralph D. Spenser, or to offer help which would eventually reveal the real Jimmy Valentine. Fortunately, he chose the latter, justifying his reformed state of life.

3.2   Types of Participant Role and Circumstance

This section of the paper describes the participant roles and circumstances that affect the life reformation of the protagonist in O. Henry's "A Retrieved Reformation."
        Various kinds of participants are involved in each process, as shown in Table 3. The story is highly dominated by the role of the actor who gives meaning to every action and decision made toward other characters. This is evident in the role of the actor, specifically the protagonist Jimmy, in constructing changes to the world around him. Expectedly, the high frequency and percentage of the actor is supported by the high frequency and percentage of the goal. This means that every action of the character, especially the protagonist Jimmy Valentine/Ralph D. Spenser, has a specific goal to achieve, as shown in the example below.

And he accomplished the wish of his heart.

And	*he*	*accomplished*	*the wish of his heart.*
	Actor	Material	Goal

Table 3
Frequency and percentage distributions of participant roles

Types of Participant	Frequency	Percentage
Actor	141	32.56%
Senser	35	8.08%
Carrier	46	10.62%
Behaver	5	1.15%
Sayer	19	4.39%
Existent	4	0.92%
Goal	113	26.10%
Phenomenon	20	4.62%
Attribute	25	5.77%
Beneficiary	25	5.77%
Total	**433**	**100%**

Indeed, the goals become significant in the full-character reformation of Jimmy. This suggests that the participants need to set target goals to materialize the action, which are apparent in the use of action rather than stative verbs. Hence, the participants' roles are geared toward an action that may affect others. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), actor-goal in a transformative clause has an aspect of change pertaining to existing conditions of actor or goal.

In the text, those goals such as *his pardon*, *sentence*, and *cigar* provide a dark background of his past. On the other hand, the following goals serve as the protagonist's initial opportunity to change his life—*railroad ticket*, *a five-dollar bill*, *his key*, and *suitcase*. Similarly, the following goals—*shoe-store*, *a good run of trade*, *wish of his heart*, *nice store*, *breakfast*, *the respect of the community*, *this letter*, *an honest living*, and *the finest girl*—are among the significant goals in finally building reformation.

Numerous instances of circumstances are involved in each process. Table 4 also displays the circumstances of location (time and place), which correspond to 92 (44.88%) instances. This is the most dominant type over other circumstances followed by manner with 46 (22.44%); cause, 24 (11.71%); accompaniment, 21 (10.24%); contingency, 12 (4.88%); and extent, ten (4.88%). Looking at how these circumstances shape the protagonist's character, the change of Jimmy's milieu also gives way for him to forget his past and face the beginning of his new life with new environment, people, and activities. The text further proves that changes in one's environment can be helpful in establishing a new life.

Likewise, a goal does not settle on a single ground; rather, it is created both by the challenges and the kindness of time and milieu. The following clause exemplifies a circumstance of location:

> **At a quarter past seven on the next** morning (***Circ: Time***), Jimmy stood
> **in the warden's outer's office** (***Circ: Location***).

Table 4
Frequency and percentage distributions of kinds of circumstance

Circumstance	Frequency	Percentage
Extent: *duration*, *distance*, *frequency*	10	4.88%
Location: *time*, *place*	92	44.88%
Manner: *means*, *quality*, *comparison*, *degree*	46	22.44%
Cause: *reason*, *purpose*, *behalf*	24	11.71%

Table 4 continued...

Circumstance	Frequency	Percentage
Contingency: *condition*, *default*, *concession*	12	5.85%
Accompaniment: *addition*, *comitative*	21	10.24%
Total	**205**	**100%**

Aside from location, circumstances of manner were also employed in the text. Most of them were used positively such as *genially*, *cordially*, *fairly*, *socially*, *with happiness and lively youth*, and *smoothly*, among others. An example is shown below.

She lowered her eyes and colored **slightly** (***Circ: Manner***).

This circumstance of manner allows the readers to understand the protagonist's character development by showing how he deals with every action and decision he makes until he reaches a reformed life. Other examples of the circumstance of manner were used negatively such as *awfully*, *hysterically*, *as loudly as*, *in a shaky voice*, and *wildly*, among others. However, they become instrumental in shaping the new life of Jimmy as reflected in the process *softly smile on his lips and in his keen eyes*. Although circumstances are a minor component of transitivity, they may be used as a powerful tool for describing actions and decisions of characters, especially the protagonist. Despite their minimal roles, they specifically give a clearer account of Jimmy Valentine's/Ralph D. Spenser's life in describing the location, extent, manner, cause, contingency, and accompaniment of the involved processes in the story.

4.   Conclusion

Transitivity analysis reveals the characters' physical, behavioral, psychological, and relational existence in the narrative examined. In other words, it describes the development of the protagonist in terms of what he does, thinks, and says in relation to other characters. Choices in terms of clause structure and words constitute a profound exploration of character delineation and plot development. Through transitivity, the protagonist, Jimmy Valentine, is presented in various roles: actor/goal, existent, carrier of attributes, identified possessor of characteristics, and sayer. The high distribution of the material approach (57.61%) being an actor (32.56%) clearly reveals his active physical participation that allows him to reform his life after being jailed. Thus, the pattern of the protagonist's experiences is composed of actions and events, which are central to the narrative. Moreover, transitivity analysis further delineates the protagonist's portrayal of masculinity as evident in the choice of mental processes, specifically 'want,' which, according to Halliday Matthiessen (2014), is a kind of

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mental process that has no feature of emotion. Frequencies of material and mental processes complement each other based on the protagonist's strong desire or inner consciousness (mental), which allows him to do various actions (material) leading to life reformation. Additionally, the protagonist shows precise actions that are contributory to his reformed life based on the high distribution of circumstances of location.

Using the transitivity system as a framework can guide readers to further understand the action and relation of characters to one another and to the society they live in. Furthermore, transitivity analysis can help the readers understand an author's linguistic choices and views of reality. The analyzed short story is seemingly comparable to the life story of O. Henry, which may suggest that transitivity analysis and literary criticism complement each other to further derive an objective analysis of literary texts as transitivity can show how an author "encodes, through language choice, his mental picture of reality and how he accounts for his experience of the world around him" (Qasim et al., 2018, p. 305).

Furthermore, this paper shows that the teaching of literature can be strengthened by using a linguistic approach through the use of systems of transitivity distribution of verbs. Likewise, students would have a clear understanding that language is no longer studied in isolation from literature. In other words, "Language and literature should team up for their mutual benefit" (Tarrayo, 2018, p. 1). Transitivity should be used by both teachers and students as one of the bases for literary analysis because it is indeed used to uncover hidden or implicit meanings brought by characters and literary texts themselves. In fact, this study proves that style is a choice of an author and his or her technique of showing a character's ways of thinking, doing, saying, and behaving, which can be essentially revealed through transitivity analysis.

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