

Tolkien's Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions in Halliday's Transitivity

Dhuha Ahmed Hamadi (M.A.)

General Directorate of Education in Anbar

dhuhaahmed555@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper aims to investigate and analyze proverbs and proverbial expressions which are socially acceptable, used by J. R. R. Tolkien, in his novel "The Hobbit", according to Halliday's transitivity theory. It shows how they were woven within the events of novel to achieve his persuasive strategies. Plus, it presents the way that the novelist successfully used to persuade children and make them comprehend and understand them. The study results reveal that the frequency of different processes varies in different rates. In addition, he uses the relational process, which occupies the first place among the others, to create the positive image in the children's mind.

Keywords: Transitivity, proverbs, The Hobbit.

الملخص :

يهدف البحث الى تقصي وتحليل الامثال والتعابير المثالية، المقبولة اجتماعياً والتي استخدمها توكلين في روايته، وفقاً لنظرية المتعدية لهالدي. تظهر الدراسة كيف حاك الامثال ضمن احداث الرواية لتحقيق استراتيجية الاقناع. اضافة الى ذلك، انها تعرض الطريقة التي استخدمها بنجاح لاقتناع الاطفال وجعلهم يستوعبونها. تكشف نتائج الدراسة بأن عملية ذات العلاقة تأتي بالمرتبة الاولى من بين العمليات الاخرى لغرض خلق صورة ايجابية في ذهن اطفال.

Introduction

A proverb is defined as a short statement which states either a general truth or a piece of advice. It is used as part of everyday spoken language and folk literary works. The Hobbit is a novel that is full of fancy. It was written in 1937 by J. R. R. Tolkien. It seems to be as a classic novel in literature of children. It is remarkable both for using proverbs and proverbial expressions and for creating new ones. Regarding some literary critics' views, The Hobbit

reflects Tolkien's own experiences during the World War I. It also shows his interest in mythology and legend. It is considered to be "the most popular of all twentieth-century fantasies for children". Its tone is suitable to address them. He uses a simple language to persuade them and understand the events of the novel. He puts these proverbs and proverbial expressions to achieve his intentions" The Hobbit". Tolkien uses proverbs and proverbial expressions to add literary effects to his work and to make it near to the real world. They are one of the main elements he utilizes to connect between the fictional world and the real world in order to persuade his readers/ children. Tolkien successfully weaves them with the events of the story. His innovation is apparently shown in this field.

The aim of the study is to investigate the proverbs and proverbial expressions ,used by the novelist, in The Hobbit and then to analyze them in the frame of Halliday's transitivity theory which concerns the ideational function. Accordingly, it shows which process is being used in the novel. This reveals that they can help to interpret and understand them easily. Transitivity is considered to be the main element/clause in experiential function which divides into: participants, process and circumstances. The former is represented by nominal groups whereas the second is realized by verbal groups. Finally, the latter is indicated either by adverbial groups, prepositional phrases or nominal groups. Circumstances provide the circumstantial information about the process.

Transitivity: Prelude

Transitivity is defined as a category that grammatically analyzes a clause construction. It shows the relationship between the verb and dependent elements of structure (David Crystal 494). R. L. Trask agrees with Crystal's definition and adds that according to systemic linguistics, its notion refers to certain elements which are the process type, the participants' number involved and "the manner in which they are involved" (305-6).

Transitive verb means a verb having one or more objects. Traditionally, transitivity is a global property of the clause. The activity moves from the agent to the patient. At least two participants are traditionally found in the clause with an action which has an effectiveness on them (Paul J. Hopper and Sandra A. Thompson 251). Huijing Wang states that words traditionally are identified and divided into part-of-speech categories, the verb category is one of them. Accordingly, the verb is a word or word group expressing action, condition, or state of being. The verb classes are generally classified into: transitive verbs, intransitive verbs and copular (linking) verbs

(170-1). The first two are considered to be action verbs. Intransitive verbs mean those that do not need words to complete its meaning while transitive verbs take one or more than one object or complement so as to complete its meaning .For example:

(1) John grew. (intransitive verb)

(2) Lily enjoys music.(transitive verb)

Hopper and Thompson describe the transitivity as connection between the complex of semantic and morphosyntactic parameters. It shows many components, "only one of which is the presence of an object of the verb". They suggest a list of transitivity parameters (251-99).

Today, grammarians regard the phenomenon of transitivity as a grammatical property rather than lexical one because the same verb can occur with the different transitivity patterns in various contexts ,e. g.,

(3) Does your dog bite? (no object)

(4) The cat bit him. (one object)

(5)can you bite me off a piece of banana?(two objects)

Transitive verbs have various types. Firstly, it is a monotransitive verb which means a verb taking an object. Secondly, a ditransitive verb can be defined as a verb having two objects: direct and indirect objects, e. g.,

(6) John gave Mary the book.

Thirdly, a tritransitive verb is a verb that has three objects: an indirect object, a direct object and a prepositional phrase as in:

(7)I 'll trade you this bicycle for your binoculars.

This type of transitive verbs is not recognized by all the descriptive grammarians ("Transitivity").

Halliday's Model of Transitivity:

There are three aspects of the clause when one tries to analyze transitivity structure and they are as follows:

1. The selection of a process is determined by the verbal group of the clause.
2. The selection of participants is realized in the nominal groups.

3. The selection of circumstances can be expressed either by a verbal groups or prepositional phrases (Suzanne Eggins 214- 15).

The transitivity system explains the world of experience in terms of a reasonable set of process types. Each one is different from other as each has its own scheme to construe specific domain of experience (M. A. K. Halliday and Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen 170). These processes are as follows:

1. Material process is the process of doing-and-happening. It deals with one's experience of the material world. It consists of two frequent participant elements: the actor and the goal. The former is the one that does the deed while the latter shows to whom the action is extended (ibid 180). These can be explained in the following example

(8) The lion caught the tourist. (actor... goal)

2. Mental process is the process of sensing. It is related to one's experience of the world of his/her own consciousness like “perception”, “reaction” and “cognition. It consists of two participants: the Senser and Phenomenon (ibid 197).

(9) I hate cockroaches more than rats. (sense... phenomenon)

3. Relational process is the process of being and having. This process has various types which are intensive, possessive and circumstantial ones. These can be either attributive or identifying modes as in (ibid 210-216)

(10) Sarah is wise. (intensive: attributive)

(11) Sarah is the leader. (intensive: identifying)

4. Behavioural process is the process of behaving. It is concerned with physiological and psychological behaviour, for example, “breathing, dreaming, smiling, and coughing.” The “behavior” is the participant that is behaving (ibid 248-216).

(12) I weep for you. (behavior)

5. Verbal process is the process of saying. It has three participants: the Sayer, the Receiver and the Verbiage. It is not necessary to have a conscious participant and it is possible to have a participant as “a watch” as in (ibid 216-256)

(13) My watch says its ten o'clock. (the sayer)

6. Existential process refers to something that exists or happens. Existential clauses usually have the verb be. In this process, 'there' occurs as a Subject but it has no representational function. The object or event that is being said to exist is called Existent (ibid 259).

(14) There was an old person of Dover. (existent)

The processes can be briefly shown at the table below (Halliday 143) :

Table 1. The Processes of Halliday's transitivity

Process type	Category Meaning	Participants
material: action event	'doing' 'doing' 'happening'	Actor, Goal
behavioral	'behaving'	Behaver
mental: perception affection cognition	'sensing' 'seeing' 'feeling' 'thinking'	Senser, Phenomenon
Verbal	'saying'	Sayer, Target
relational: attribution identification	'being' 'attributing' 'identifying'	Token, Value Carrier, Attribute Identified, Identifier
Existential	'existing'	Existent

Proverbs: Definition

Mieder defines a proverb, which comes from Latin word 'proverbium', as "a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation" (qtd. in Mieder 3).. It

shows everyday experiences and common observations in a simple language. As a matter of fact, proverbs are used in spoken and written communication. Some proverbs die out over time since their messages or metaphors are no longer acceptable nowadays whereas new ones add to the proverbial collections. The first collection of proverbs belonged to the third millennium B.C. engraved on Sumerian cuneiform tables which are considered to be as the basis of "commonsensical codes of conduct and everyday observations of human nature"(ibid XII).

Briefly, proverbs and proverbial expressions convey human's experiences of life and it is regarded as a basic truth in a short sentence. Arab people describe them that they are as salt of food. From one generation to another, they are conveyed. Each tells a story and teaches a lesson.

Tolkien: The Hobbit

J. R. R. Tolkien is one of the most famous English authors and philologists of the 20th century. He is the founder of the genre of modern fantasy literature, and his works greatly affect on today's literary culture. (Philipp Pötz 15).

The Hobbit, written in 1937, is a fantasy novel that Tolkien narrated it to his sons at night. Then , he wrote The Lord of the Rings since his children no longer need to bed time stories. The Hobbit is well- organized in the children's traditional narratives. Lios R. Kuznets affirms that it is suitable for them because of the rhetorical structure of this fiction. He adds that Bilbo's story is fit for children because of certain features: firstly, the characters are preadolescent who can be easily identified by the children. Additionally, there is "a focus on the relationship between the time and the narrative development within the framework of a condensed narrative time", e. g., the actions happen within a year and the changes of the season are emphasized. In other words, a correspondence is occurred between the movements of the characters and the seasonal changes. Finally, a geography is defined by separating the safe and dangerous places (eqt. in J. A. Poveda 9)

The narrator of this novel is omniscient. He knows everything related to present events and the future of the story. This is obviously appeared by the utilization of hints referring to the development of the story such as "It was not the last time he wished that" which is frequently repeated throughout the novel events. According to the narrator, Gandalf , the wizard, seems to be the wise character who knows about the future "You will thank me before all is over". By

being an omniscient narrator, it gives him the opportunity to control the narration times whenever he wants. He focuses on the quest importance as well as the Smaug defeat in chapter 14. His credible words makes the reader become eager to depend on what he relates. (Diogo Gonçalves 47).

The theme of this novel is not only limited to the children's adventures but also to contain war tales, the fight between the good and the evil, ethic tales and personal development. Its plot shows how Bilbo joining the company of 13 dwarves and Gandalf going to the Lonely Mountains in the east in order to get the ancient treasure which is taken and guarded by the dragon Smaug. By reading the book, the reader probably feel that at the end of Journey, Bilbo returned home not only with the treasure but also with compassion, maturity and bravery. By the time, he becomes a hero(Cecilia Wiklander 3).

The Analysis

1."Wizards after all are wizards" (Chap.1, p.6).

This clause is presented as an identifying- relational process of intensity. "wizards after all" is the identified/token and the identifier/value is "wizards".

2."Dark is for dark business!" (Chap.1, p.13).

This clause is an attributive – relational process. "Dark " is the carrier, "is " is intensive process. "for dark business" is circumstantial/ attributive phrase which gives a feature of "dark".

3."Heroes are scarce"(Chap.1, p.17).

The clause shows the ideational function which is an attributive- relational process of intensity (quality). The carrier is "heroes", the process is "are" and the attribute is "scarce".

4." Adventures are not all pony-rides in May sunshine"(Chap.2, p.25).

It is an identifying-relational process of intensity. "Adventures" is to be the identified/token , "are not" is the process and " all pony rides" is the identifier/value. The circumstantial phrase(location) is " in May sunshine".

5. "Valleys have ears" (Chap.3, p.38).

This clause is an attributive –relational process. "Valleys" is the carrier/processor, "have" is the process of possession and "ears" is the attribute/possessed.

6. "Moon letters are rune-letters" (Chap.3, p.39).

The clause is an identifying-relational process. The identified /token is "moon letters", "are" is the process and the identifier/ value is "rune-letters".

7. "The wind whipped the rain" (Chap.4, p.42).

It is a behavioural process. "The wind" is the behavior, "whipped" is the process and "the rain" is phenomenon.

8. "There is nothing like looking, if you want to find something" (Chap.4, p.42).

There are two clauses in this example. The first clause "there is ..." represents a logical sequencing to "if ..." clause and it is an existential process. "There" is syntactically a subject which has no representational function. "Is" is the process and "nothing" is the extent/event. "Like looking" is circumstantial element/comparison. The second clause, "if you want to..", is a material process. The actor is "you", "want to find" is the process and the goal is "something".

9. "Wicked creatures were afraid to cheat when they played at it" (Chap.5, p.58).

This example has two clauses. The former is an emotive- mental process. The senser is "wicked creatures", "were afraid to" is the process and "cheat" is phenomenon. The latter, "when they...", is a material process. The actor is "they", "played" is the process and "at it" is a circumstantial phrase/location referring to the riddle guess.

10. "A promise is a promise" (Chap.5, p.58).

The clause is an identifying-relational process. The identified/token is "a promise", the process is "is" and "a promise" is the identifier/value.

11. "The tunnel seems to have no end" (Chap.5, p.51).

It is an attributive-relational process of possession. The carrier is "the tunnel", "seems to have" is the process and "no end" is an attribute.

12."Escaping goblins to be caught by wolves"(Chap.6, p.72).

This clause is a material process. "Escaping goblins" is the goal, the process is indicated in passive voice, i. e, "to be caught", the stated Actor "wolves" is preceded by the thematized Goal "escaping goblins".

13."Wolves are afraid of fire at all times"(Chap.6, p.74).

The clause is an attributive-relational process. The carrier is "wolves", "are afraid of" is the process. "Fire" is the attribute and the circumstantial element/extent is "at all times".

14."Eagles are not kindly birds"(Chap.6, p.75).

It is an identifying-relational process. The word "eagles" is the identified/token, the process is "are not", "kindly" is circumstantial element/manner. The identifier/value is "birds".

15."Also naughty little boys that plays with fire get punished"(Chap.6, p.76).

This clause is an attributive-relational process. "Naughty little boys" is the carrier, the process is "get" and "punished" is the attribute. The clause "that plays with fire" is a material process. The actor is previously mentioned, i.e., "naughty little boys". Its process is "get", "with fire" is circumstantial phrase whose type is accompaniment.

16."He is a skin-changer"(Chap.7, p.83).

It is an identifying –relational process of intensity. "He" is the identified/token, "is" is the process, and "a skin –changer" is the identifier/value.

17."Bees were busy everywhere"(Chap.7, p.84).

This clause is an attributive-relational process. The carrier is "bees", the process is "were" which is intensive, and "busy" is the attribute. "Everywhere" is a circumstantial element (location).

18."He loves his animals as his children"(Chap.7, p.98).

It is a mental process. The senser is "he", "loves" is the process, and the phenomenon is "his animals". "As his children" is a circumstantial phrase (comparison) which is a role type.

19."There are no safe paths in this part of the world"(Chap.7, p.99).

This clause is an existential process. "There" is expletive, "are" is the process, "no safe paths" is the existent, and "in the part of the world" is circumstantial phrase(location).

20."The nights were the worst"(Chap.8, p.102).

The clause is an attributive-relational process of intensity. "The nights" is the carrier, its process is "were", and "the worst" is the attribute.

21."Don't start grumbling against orders"(Chap.8, p.104).

It is a behavioural process. The subject is omitted, i.e., "you" is the behavior, since the clause is imperative. The process is "don't start" which is negative and "grumbling" is the behaviour. "Against orders" is a circumstantial phrase (cause/behalf).

22."A feast would be no good, if we never got back alive from it" (Chap.8. p.109).

Two clauses are found in this proverbial expression. The first clause is an attributive-relational process. "A feast" is the carrier, the intensive process is "would be", and "no good" is the attribute. The second which is "If...." clause is a material process. The actor is "we" , the process is "got back" in the negative that is shown by "never". The goal is "alive" and "from it" is circumstantial phrase/ location used for enhancing.

23."The news had speared from the doors of the hall like fire through all the town"(Chap.10, p.140).

The clause is a behavioral process. The behavior is "the news", "had speared" is the process which has an intransitive verb "speared". There are several circumstantial elements: the first one is location/place " from the doors of the hall", the second is manner/comparison ,i.e., "like fire", the third is " through all the town" which is manner/means.

24."Nothing moved in the waste"(Chap.11,p.145).

This clause is a behavioral process. "Nothing" is the behavior, "moved" is the process, and the circumstantial element/location is "in the waste".

25. "They [the black birds] look like spies of evil" (Chap.11, p.145).

The clause is an attributive-relational process. "They" is the carrier, "look" is the process, and "like spies of evil" is the circumstantial phrase/comparison.

26. "Every worm has his weak spot" (Chap.12, p.157).

It is an attributive-relational process. The processor is "every worm", "has" is possession and "weak point" is the attribute/possessed.

27. "Lucky numbers don't always come off" (Chap.12, p.158).

It is a behavioral process. "Lucky numbers" is the behavior, "don't come off" is the process which is in the negative. "always" is a circumstantial element/manner.

28. "You'll come to bad end, if you go with such friends" (Chap.12, p.159).

There are two clauses. The first one is "you'll come to bad end" which is a behavioral process. The behavior is "you", the process is "will come", "to bad end" is a circumstantial element. The second clause is "if ..." clause and it is also a behavioral process. The behavior is "you", "go" is the process, and "with such friends" is a circumstantial phrase/accompaniment.

29. "You must realize that your success has made you some bitter enemies" (Chap.12, p.160).

This proverbial expression is a mental process. "You" is the senser, "must realize" is the process that is a cognitive type. "That your success" is the agent, "has made" is the process, "you" is the actor and "some bitter enemies" is the goal. So, "that your success has made you some bitter enemies" is a material process.

30. "Never laugh at live dragons" (Chap.12, p.161).

It is a behavioural process. The subject is omitted which is "you", it is the behavior. "never laugh" is the process, "at live dragons" is a circumstantial element.

31. "While there's life, there is hope"(Chap.13, p.166).

Two clauses are in this proverb which are connected by the adjunct "while". The first clause is "there's life" which is an existential process. "There" is expletive that is needed interpersonally as a subject, "is" is the process and "hope" is existent. The second one is "there is hope" which is an existential process, too. "There" is also expletive that merely occupies the subject position. The process is "is" and the existent is "hope".

32. "You put your worst cause last and in the chief place"(Chap.15, p.188).

This clause is a material process. "You" is the actor, "put" is the process, and "your worst cause" is the goal. "Last and in the chief place" is the circumstantial element/location.

33. "The treasure is likely to be your death"(Chap.16, p.190).

It is an identifying-relational process. "The treasure" is the identified/token. "Is" is the process of intensity, "likely" is circumstantial element/manner and "to be your death" is the identifier/value .

34. "Things are drawing towards the end now"(Chap.16, p.194).

This clause is a behavioral process. "Things" is the behavior, "are drawing" is the process, and "towards the end now" is a circumstantial phrase/location.

35. "The clouds burst"(Chap.17, p.195).

In this proverb, a behavioral process clearly appears. "The clouds" is the behavior and "burst" is the process which is an intransitive verb.

36. "Even a burglar has his feelings"(Chapt.18, p.208).

An attributive-relational process is in this proverbial expression. The carrier is "a burglar", the process is "has", and "his feelings" is the attribute.

37. "Merry is May time"(Chap.19, p.212).

This clause is an attributive-relational process. "Merry" is the carrier, "is" the process, and "May time" is the attribute.

Conclusion

In most cases, proverbs and proverbial expressions spring from people's experiences which are related to their every day's life. According to the data analysis, it reveals that the most frequent use of processes of Halliday's transitivity is *relational* process which scores 48 % , i. e , 20 examples out of the whole novel. These examples are divided into: identifying and attributive-relational processes. Besides, the former scores 7 examples and the latter is 13 examples. This process is used to identify one experience with other experiences to weave the events of the novel. Moreover, it create a very positive image of novelist's idea to stimulate the reader's confidence. In the second position, the behavioral process scores 9 occurrences, i.e., 21%. By the use of behavioral process, the author intends to persuade them to live and feel the situations of the novel . *Material* process scores 6 examples. It forms 14% out of the whole examples of this novel. It is the process of doing actions or happening events. It makes the events more active to make suspense and excitement on the part of the readers (children). *Existential* process comes in the fourth place since it scores 4 occurrences, i.e., 10%. *Existential process* conveys both the author's credibility and reliability. This can be done by linking an idea to a real location. *mental* process recurs three examples with an 7 % average. This process, which stands for inner experience, is used to strike the emotional side of the readers (children).. No examples of verbal process have been recorded in this novel. All these results are explained in the following figure.

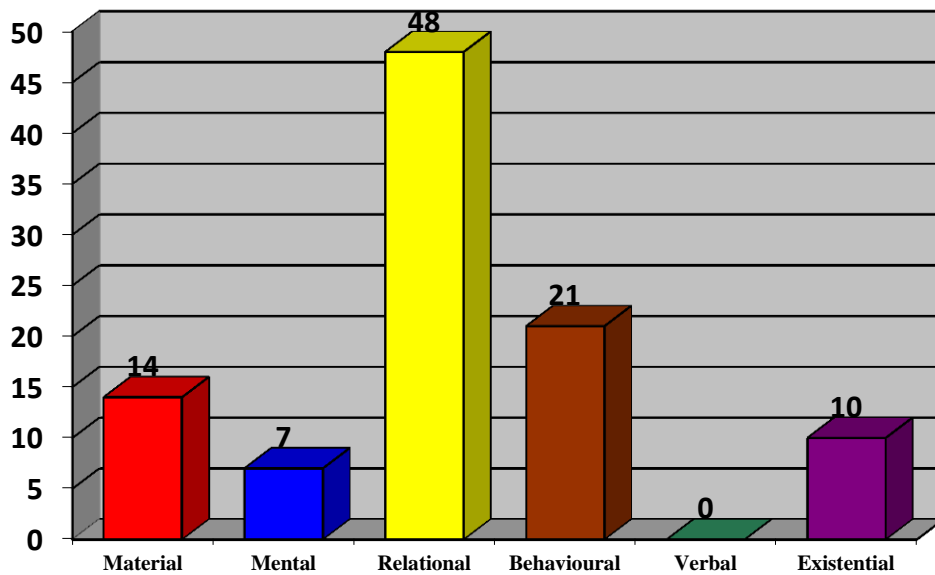


Figure (1) Graphical Representation of Transitivity Processes

Works Cited:

- "The Hobbit". Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 30 July 2000. Web.5 March2015. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/the_hobbit>
- "Transitivity". Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 22 March 2016. Web.5 March2015. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/the_transtivity>
- Crystal, D. A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics. 5th ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003.
- Eggs, Suzanne. An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics. 2nd Ed. New York :continuum Press, 2004.
- Gonçalves, Diogo. Bilbo Baggins: An (Un)expected Hero. n. p.: n. p., n. d. <<http://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheros>>
- Halliday, M.A.K. An Introduction to Functional Grammar. London: Edward Arnold, 1985.
- Halliday, M. A. K. and Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen. An Introduction to Functional Grammar. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Hopper, Paul J. and Sandra A. Thompson. "Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse". Language. 56.2(1980):251-299.
- J. A. Poveda. "Narrative Models in Tolkien's Stories of Middle- Earth". Journal of English Studies. Vol. 4 (2015): 7-22. n. p.: n. p.,2004.
- Pötz, Philipp. John Ronald Reuel Tolkien :His Work and World. n. p.: n. p., 2007 <<http://unet.univie.ac.at/JRR-Tolkien>>
- Tolkien, J. R. R. The Hobbit: The Enchanting Prelude to "The Lord of The Rings". n. p.: n. p., (1937).
- Trask, R. L. Language and Linguistics: The Key Concepts. Ed Peter Stockwell. 2nd ed. London: Routledge Press, 2007.
- Wang, H.T. (2015) "The Problems of Transitivity Studies and Its Solution". Open Journal of Social Sciences, 3 (2015): 170-176. China: Scientific Research Publishing Inc. , 2015.
- Wiklander, Cecilia. " The Image of Heroism in Tolkien's The Hobbit." Literary Essay. N.p : University of Gothenburg , 2011.
- Wolfgang, Mieder. Proverb: A Handbook. London: Greenwood Press, 2004.