

AN ANALYSIS OF MENTAL PROCESS IN *MILK AND HONEY* POEMS COLLECTION BY *RUPI KAUR*

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Abstract: The study of SFL in the form of poem becomes an object in this study. This study will apply one of the scopes of SFL in *Milk and Honey* poems collection. This study examines the mental process in *Milk and Honey* poems collection. The purposes of this study are (1) to identify the kinds of mental process in *Milk and Honey* poems collection, (2) to explain the way the author represents the kinds of mental process in *Milk and Honey* poems collection. This study uses theory from Halliday and Matthiessen (1999). According to that theory, mental process is divided into three types: cognition, affection, and perception. The analysis shows that cognition and perception dominate the author's representation in *Milk and Honey* poems collection, while affection is the least types appeared in this poems collection.

Keywords: SFL, mental process, *Milk and Honey*

INTRODUCTION

Language is used by everyone to deliver meaning. Language is the point for making meaning, and on the inside of meaning, there are systemic patterns of choice (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). According to Halliday in Eggins (1999: 1-2), Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is recognized as a very useful descriptive and interpretive framework for viewing language as a strategic, meaning-making resource. This framework treats language beyond its formal structures and takes the context of culture and the context of a situation in language use (Halliday, 1985, 1994; Matthiessen, 1995; Martin & Rose, 2003; Wicaksono, et al, 2021).

Meaning in text is determined by the context of culture, the context of a situation, and metafunctions. Metafunctions, to Halliday (1970), are (a) textual metafunction, is the relation between language and the situation in which it is used; (b) ideational metafunction, is the expression of content or the speaker's consciousness and experience of the real world, and (c) interpersonal, deals with social relations.

Ideational metafunction provides grammatical resources of clause rank to interpret the experiences of the word, as the meanings of the word through the systems of transitivity. Transitivity as a main component in the experiential function of the clause deals with the “transmission of concepts representing ‘processes’ or ‘experiences’: actions, events, processes of consciousness and relations” (Halliday 1985:53). Halliday further defines that the processes expressed through language represent our conception of the world. Transitivity specifies the various types of processes that are recognized within the language and the structures by which they are expressed. Transitivity structure can be characterized as participants + process + circumstances configuration that represents the function of language expressing the speaker’s experience of the external world or his own internal world.

Transitivity has various processes which each process has its own structure and meaning. According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2004), there are 3 core processes in transitivity, namely material processes, mental processes, and relational processes. The material process is a process that emphasizes the physical activities that involve energy. According to (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) mental process is a process that involves the experience of human consciousness as indicated by mental clauses or more specifically clauses of sense. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the relational process is a process that contains clauses to characterize and identify.

Halliday in Eggins (2004) defines clauses that have the meaning of thinking and feeling as a mental process. This process is classified into three points. According to Halliday the first is cognition which relates to the use of our brain and how we think about something in the process. The second is affection which uses feeling to express the process. The last is the perception or called the process of sensing. Perception represents the use of five senses like seeing, hearing, tasting Halliday (1999: 225)

There are two previous studies are relevant to this study. This previous study was done by Arina Isti’anah in 2018. It explained the mental process in *Interpreter of Maladies* and the occurrences of the character’s thought. This previous study entitled “*Mental Processes of the Main Character in Jhumpa Lahiri’s Interpreter of Maladies*”. *Interpreter of Maladies* is one of the short stories written by Jhumpa Lahiri which attracts reader’s attention. Readers may comment on the way Lahiri portrays the main character of the story, Mr. Kapasi. To interpret the character’s feelings in the story, the writer used Halliday’s Functional Linguistics to observe what happens in the character’s thoughts. The analysis shows that perceptive, cognitive, and affective dominate the narrator’s description of Mr. Kapasi, while

desiderative seems the smallest amount within the main character. The choice of those mental process types signals that Lahiri portrays Mr. Kapasi as an attentive, intellectual, and affectionate character. The second previous study is *A Systemic Functional Linguistic Analysis of the Transitivity in Jokowi's New Vision Speech* by Suswanto Ismadi Megah S. It was published in 2019. This previous study analyzed all processes of transitivity of Jokowi's speech. This study deals with the investigation of the New Vision speech of President Joko Widodo (in Short, Jokowi). This study is aimed to identify what kinds of Jokowi tend to use one utterance compared to others. This study concluded that Jokowi tended to uses material process, in distinction with verbal and behavioral processes which haven't any occurrences in his speech, it shows that he prefers action to point out his action.

Milk and Honey is a poems collection that is packaged in a book. This book was written by Rupi Kaur and published in 2014. *Milk and Honey* is divided into four chapters and each chapter gives a different purpose. The first chapter is about *the hurting* part. It tells about child sex-abuse and painful memory in the past. While the second chapter is *the loving* part, the readers are led to feel how interpersonal relationships are made between someone and his society or people around them. Then, the third chapter is *the breaking* part is the part when the readers are invited to know deeper about their intrapersonal relationship, and the readers are led to love themselves. The last part is *the healing* which deals with how we forgive our past and our self. Each part deals with a different feeling and moment. *Milk and Honey* brings readers through a journey of the bitterest moments in life and finds happiness. This study uses the mental process to analyze *Milk and Honey* poetry because the author expresses her feeling and thought in this book. This book is written based on her views about woman's problems.

This study intends to observe how mental process in *Milk and Honey* poems collection is represented by the author. The main reason of observing the mental processes in the source of data is this poems collection is feminism which uses mental process to express the author supposed meaning. To sum up, this study attempts at finding out (1) what kinds of mental process are applied in *Milk and Honey* poems collection and (2) how the author represents the kinds of mental process in *Milk and Honey* poems collection.

METHODS

The data are taken in poems collection by a feminist poet, Rupi Kaur. The book was published in 2014 by Andrews Mcmeel Publishing. The poems collection contains of four parts but this study only took 2 parts: *the hurting* part and *the loving* part. From the observation, there are 64 poems. 37 of

them are realized in mental process, which become the focus of this study. The data were analyzed by SFL approach in the form of transitivity. Transitivity analysis is employed to figure out how mental clauses are presented by the author towards the poems. Each clause is classified into its mental process type, whether it is cognition, affection, or perception.

The analysis shows that there are 77 clauses in *Milk and Honey* poems collection. From the 77 clauses, 37 clauses are cognition, 13 clauses are affection, and 27 clauses are perception. If realized in percentage, the table below summarizes the percentages of mental process in the source of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Percentages of Mental Process in *Milk and Honey* poems collection

Types	Number of Clauses	Percentages
Cognition	32	52%
Affection	10	17%
Perception	19	31%
Total	61	100%

The table above shows that the dominating types of mental process in *Milk and Honey* poems collection is cognition with 32 clauses or 52%. The second dominating types is perception with 19 clauses and 31% percentage. The least types that occurred in *Milk and Honey* poems collection is affection with 10 clauses or 17% of percentage.

To identify the types of mental process, the verb of each clause becomes the main instrument to categorize the types. The application of different mental clauses results in different types of mental process. To make this study clearer, the table below shows the mental clauses along with their categories.

Table 2. Mental Clauses in *Milk and Honey* poems collection

Types	Mental Clauses
Cognition	Forget, decided, trust, know, forget, believe, guess, understand, blame, think, fear, remember, expect
Affection	Like, love, crave
Perception	Look, touched, watch, sounds, see, smell, lick

Cognition is found mostly in the poems collection. Some clauses like *know* and *think* are repeated several times. Therefore, the table above does not mention the same clauses repeatedly. The other verbs categorized as cognition are *forget*, *decided*, *trust*, *demand*, *believe*, *guess*, *understand*, *blame*, *fear*, *need*, *remember*, *expect*, and *wondering*. In affection, the clauses

which are repeated in the source of data are *like* and *love*. The other verbs referring to affection is *crave*. In the perception, the word *look* and *touch* are repeated several times. The other verbs belonging to perception are *watch*, *sounds*, *notice*, *see*, *smell*, *smile*, *kiss*, *hear*, and *lick*.

To know how the author represents the kinds of mental process in the *Milk and Honey* poems collection, the sub-headings below describe the distribution of each mental process found in the *Milk and Honey* poems collection. The discussion begins with the type of mental process which is found the most in the poems collection: cognition, perception, and affection.

Cognition

Cognition deals with the conception of ideas. They are able to set up another clause or set of clauses because the content of thinking — as the concepts or ideas created by cognition (Halliday, 1999). Cognition is marked by some verbs like *think*, *believe*, *suppose*, *expect*, *consider*, *know*; *strike*, *occur to*, *convince*; *remind*, *escape*; *puzzle*, *understand*, *realize*, *appreciate*; *imagine*, *dream*, *intrigue*, *surprise* *pretend*; *guess*, *reckon*, *conjecture*, *hypothesize*; *wonder*, *doubt*; *remember*, *recall*, and *forget*; *fear* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Cognition express the author's idea about woman thought. It is the following proofs.

- (1) *i've had sex* she said
but i don't **know**
what making love
feels like
- (2) you look just like your mother
i **guess** i do carry her tenderness well
you both have the same eyes
cause we are both exhausted
and the hands
we share the same wilting fingers
but that rage your mother doesn't wear that anger
you're right
this rage is the one thing
i get from my father

In clauses above, the senser refers to "a woman", while the phenomenon is realized in different forms. In clause (1), the phenomenon is in the form of a thing, referring to the realization of love. In the clause, *what making love feels like* is the phenomenon, while *I've had sex she said* is the circumstance of manner showing the woman has been having sex with a man. In the clause, the author implied that the woman had a relationship but she didn't know how to be loved by her man.

Clauses (2) the senser refers to "a daughter", while the phenomenon refers to clause which tells about a daughter's consciousness. The daughter

identifies her character by herself. She realizes that she looks like her mother. Not only the face but also her destiny and her character.

Perception

Perception is the clause that represents our five senses. The act is seen, heard, tasted, or perceived in another way; however, it is not normally thought, showing emotion, or desired (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Perception is marked by some verbs like *perceive, sense; see, notice, glimpse; hear, overhear; feel; taste; smell* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Perception deals with the author's sensitivity to women through her senses without doing action. These are the following proofs.

(1) every time you
tell your daughter
you yell at her
out of love
you teach her to confuse
anger with kindness
which seems like a good idea
till she grows up to
trust men who hurt her
cause they **look** so much
like you
(2) our knees
pried open
by cousins
and uncles
and men
our bodies **touched**
by all the wrong people
that even in a bed full of safety
we are afraid

In clause (1) above, the senser of clause (1) refers to “men who hurt women”, while the phenomenon is none. In clause (1), the phenomenon is none but the clause “so much” is in the form of complement. In the clause, the author implied that she wanted to say that a daughter sees a man that looks like her father. It's not about a facial similarity but similarities in character and how he treats her.

Clauses (2) the senser refers to “the body of women”, while the clause did not have any phenomenon. This clause tells about sexual harassment that can be done by anyone even by our relatives everywhere.

Affection

Affection deals with the feeling of our heart. The verbs serving as Process are gradable; they form points on a scale (detest, loathe hate — dislike — like — love), expressing degrees of affection (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Affection is marked by some verbs like *like, fancy, love, adore, dislike, hate, detest, despise, loathe, abhor; rejoice, exult, grieve, mourn, bemoan, bewail, regret, deplore; fear, dread; enjoy, relish, marvel* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Affection deals with the author's deeply heart to express her feeling. These are the following proofs.

(1) emptying out of my mother's belly
was my first act of disappearance
learning to shrink for a family
who **likes** their daughters invisible
was the second
the art of being empty
is simple
believe them when they say
you are nothing
repeat it to yourself
like a wish
i am nothing
i am nothing
i am nothing
so often
the only reason you know
you're still alive is from the
heaving of your chest

(2) father. you always call to say nothing in particular. you ask what i'm doing or where i am and when the silence stretches like a lifetime between us i scramble to find questions to keep the conversation going. what i long to say most is. i understand this world broke you. it has been so hard on your feet. i don't blame you for not knowing how to remain soft with me. sometimes i stay up thinking of all the places you are hurting which you'll never care to mention. i come from the same aching blood. from the same bone so desperate for attention i collapse in on myself. i am your daughter. i know the small talk is the only way you know how to tell me you **love** me. cause it is the only way i know how to tell you.

In clause (1) above, the senser refers to "parents", while the phenomenon is realized in different forms. In clause (1), the phenomenon refers to daughters who are hated by her parents. In the clause, the author implied that it's about a daughter who is born from having sex out of marriage. Her parents didn't want her to be born in this world.

Clause (2) the senser “you” refers to “a father”, while the phenomenon refers to “me” who stands as a daughter. It tells about a father and a daughter who are separated. They both love each other but they cannot express the love itself. The father cannot express his love but the daughter knows very well that her father loves her very much. She understands why her father cannot be sweet to her because of their distance. The daughter always thinks of her father; is he happy? Does his heart hurt? Her father never tells her about his feeling. The only thing that her father did to her is asking for her feeling, asking for her activities, asking for her dream, etc. This is the way her father loves her and express his love.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis, the author uses different types of mental processes for some purposes. First, the employment of different verbs in the poems generates in different kinds of the senser, phenomenon, in the mental process. Second, the use of different types represents the author context representation. Each poem has different context even it has the same type of mental process. From the analysis, the author intends messages for the reader is to use their mind and thought rather than heart because cognition is the dominating type and affection is the least types occur in this poems collection. To sum up, this study enriches SFL study about mental process especially in poem. Further research on different types of transitivity is suggested to expand this study.

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