

Functional stylistic analysis: Transitivity in *Philippine Daily Inquirer* and *The Washington Post*

^{1,2}Luzminda R. Valeriano and ^{2,3}Rachelle B. Lintao

¹Navotas Polytechnic College, Navotas, The Philippines, ²Philippine Normal University and ³University of Santo Tomas, Manila, The Philippines
luzvaleriano1710@yahoo.com; rblintao@ust.edu.ph

Abstract

This paper aims to examine the similarities and differences in the stylistic features of Philippine and American editorials, particularly the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (PDI) and *The Washington Post* (WP), respectively, using Halliday's (2000) transitivity method. Specifically, the study sought to answer these questions: (1) What are the similarities and differences in the transitivity process types employed in the PDI and the WP editorials? and (2) What are the predominant process types employed in the editorials of the two newspapers? The results of the study revealed that the stylistic features of the WP editorials give more emphasis on people's characters and attributes, which are regarded to be important factors in the argumentative nature of the WP editorials. On the other hand, PDI editorials focus on 'what is done to someone' and 'who does it.' This study puts forward that the transitivity system could be an effective tool to analyze the stylistic features of editorials. The results also imply that in the application of process types, the stylistic features related to the editorials' expected or commonly observed style and purposes, i.e., informative, persuasive, argumentative, and purposive, could be realized.

Keywords: Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), transitivity system, editorial, stylistics, contrastive rhetoric

1. Introduction

Wales (1989) defines stylistics as study of styles, while stylistic analysis is generally concerned with the uniqueness of a text, with what is peculiar to the uses of a language in a literary or nonliterary material for delivering a message. The term "style" is used by linguists to describe the choices which language makes available to users, above and beyond the choices necessary for the simple expression of a meaning. Linguistic forms can be interpreted as a set of possibilities for the production of texts, thus, the synonym linguistic styles. One basic idea of stylistics is that stylistic choice has an effect on the reader and that it should be possible to understand the causal relation between the said stylistic choice and its particular effect. Different notions of style give critics their choice of method of stylistic analysis. As stated by Crystal (1989), variations in English use are determined by *group identities*: the more a group of people is given the status of a social institution within a community, the more distinctive that language would likely be. The stylistic features of a text can be analyzed by looking into the transitivity component of the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG).

1.1 Transitivity

Put forward by Halliday (2000) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), SFG pays great attention to how speakers generate utterances and texts to convey their intended meanings. A basic notion of SFG presents that language has three metafunctions (i.e., ideational, interpersonal, and textual), which are reflected in a huge system network that specifies all meaning potentials. The ideational function is the use of language to express content and to communicate information. Where content is the focus, emphasis will be on transferring information clearly and effectively so that the work can be comprehended quickly and easily. Moreover, the ideational function involves two main systems, namely, transitivity and ergativity.

According to Halliday (2000), SFG includes other functions: textual and interpersonal. Briefly, language, in the textual function, is used to signify discourse, and that the language – the text – is related to itself and to its context of use, including the preceding and following text and the context of situation. The interpersonal function, on the other hand, is the use of language to establish and maintain social relations. This function involves modalities related to the modus system. This system is signified by two main elements, namely, mood and residue. This paper zeroed in on the ideational function of language through transitivity system.

Transitivity (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) relates to how events and their participants are represented in discourse. Based on the semantic categories of process, participant, and circumstance, transitivity describes how different phenomena taking place in the real world can be coded linguistically (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In any event, there can be three elements involved: the process itself, participants, and circumstances. Thus, transitivity “specifies the different types of process that are recognized in the language, and the structures by which they are expressed” (Halliday, 1985, p. 101).

Transitivity is a semantic concept that examines how meaning is represented in a clause. By definition, transitivity in SFG is a process-centered system employed to encode and decode the experience and knowledge of human beings via lexico-grammar. It is Halliday (1967) who first stated that transitivity should be regarded as a property of clauses rather than verbs. Thompson (2000) also explicates that transitivity is a system for describing the whole clause, rather than the verb and its object. The systems and networks of transitivity convey the user’s experience of the external world of the senses and the internal world of the mind. The term “process” of transitivity refers to the “goings-on” in reality, for example, doing, happening, and being. According to the latest edition of Halliday’s (2008) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, transitivity system is composed of six processes that represent human experience in terms of physical and physiological actions (Material and Behavioral), thinking and speaking actions (Mental and Verbal), and actions that signal the existence of something or someone and their identifying features (Existential and Relational). Several works (Halliday, 1967, 1976, 2001, 2008; Hopper & Thompson, 1980; Langacker, 1987) have broadened the domain of transitivity, and each could be regarded as a milestone in the study of transitivity.

Yang (2001) conducted a transitivity analysis on editorials and reported that the specific stylistic feature of editorials, i.e., narration interspersed with comments, was realized by the predominant use of the material and the relational processes. Meanwhile, Wu’s (2004) findings of a high frequency of mental processes in the English e-mail used for academic

discussion reflected the interactive style of the discourse. Babaii and Ansary (2005) studied academic book reviews from discipline-related professional journals (i.e., physics, sociology, and literature) and found that book reviewers in different disciplines used varied devices in conveying their messages and in striking a balance between impersonality and interaction. Applying systemic functional theories, Gong and Fang (2005) analyzed the process types of the transitivity system taken from court debates and reported that the ideational function in the court discourse was mainly realized through the processes of transitivity. Furthermore, the analysis of the transitivity system in literary discourses by a number of researchers (Cunanan, 2011; Halliday 1971; Liu, 1998; Short, 1976) demonstrates that the transitivity system helps reveal the personalities of heroes depicted by writers and contribute to a better understanding of the stylistic features in literary pieces. On the other hand, the analysis of the transitivity system in nonliterary discourses prompted in recent years has focused on the expressivities of transitivity in describing text features.

1.2 On Editorials

Editorials are short, argumentative texts that are unsigned and appear in the first pages of a newspaper. Editorials as a genre are regarded to have appeared first in the mid-19th century when newspapers in their present form started to be published (Kress, 1985). They form a genre of journalism that not only “reports” but also provides “a judgment of an event” (Richardson 2007, p. 60). Thus, editorials differ inherently from news articles, which aim at presenting news objectively, without taking particular positions. Editorials, therefore, “are argumentative and aim to persuade by explaining” (Le, 2010, p. 214). As an openly opinion-related text type, they represent the official position of a newspaper on various issues (Le, 2010).

An editorial delivers a newspaper’s stand on a relevant development or an issue. Therefore, this newspaper section is often argumentative by nature because it aims to persuade the readers. What is the connection of SFG’s ideational function to an editorial? By traversing at its SFG’s ideational function, an editorial can be analyzed in terms of how language is used to express its contents and how such information is communicated to a large crowd (since a newspaper is a powerful media tool). The ideational meaning can also discuss how language is effectively used to serve the purpose of an editorial, that is, presenting facts to justify or prove an argument. In addition, this genre tends not only to persuade readers but also to influence public opinion, promote critical thinking, and cause people to take action.

Yuli and Yushan (2012) conducted a comparison of the transitivity system in English and Chinese E-C translation based on Halliday’s theoretical frameworks. It was found that the six processes in the transitivity system in English and Chinese are semantically the same and can remain unchanged in E-C translation; while in certain circumstances, process transfer is necessary. Another study on transitivity was done by Caffarel and Rechnieski (2009) titled “Systemic Functional Approach to analyzing and interpreting ideology: An illustration of French editorials.” Moreover, Lehtoaro’s (2013) research analyzed the use of transitivity in her study, “Editorials, election and persuasion: Semantic representation in ideologically polarized discourse in the *New York Post* and the *New York Times*” by employing Halliday’s (1985) SFG.

The foregoing studies related to transitivity dealt only with stylistic analyses on literary works, email, debate discourse, and academic books. A number of studies were

observed to have employed the transitivity method but on a single editorial only. Meanwhile, some contrastive rhetoric studies on editorials employed theories, such as the application of coherence theory by Connor and Johns (1990), which dealt with the ‘topical structure analysis’ of American and Filipino editorials. Other discourse analyses zeroed in on the functional grammar approach such as the utilization of the news-transitivity analysis (Renstrom, 2012). It can then be said that only few research paid attention to the use of transitivity in comparing and contrasting editorial stylistics of two different cultures.

In emphasizing that writing styles differ across cultures, Kaplan (1966) gained much support from several linguistic studies. The need to discover and describe the causes for the preferences found in other cultures is based on the notion that there are unique rhetorical traditions in at least the world’s major cultures. This idea supports the fact that people in different cultures do not only write in contrasting styles, as what has been adequately demonstrated in numerous recent contrastive rhetoric studies, but they also have developed other methods of writing because of differences in worldview. Therefore, it is crucial to explore, find, and describe the origins of rhetorical differences in various cultures.

1.3 Research Questions

In view of the preceding literature and previous studies done on stylistic choices, transitivity, and editorials, it can be noted that exploring the processes employed in clauses (via SFG’s transitivity system), which would reveal the meaning of editorials and the stylistic techniques used by writers, is worth investigating. This study then was aimed at uncovering the similarities and differences in specific stylistic features based on the transitivity process types employed in Philippine and American editorials, particularly in *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (PDI) and *The Washington Post* (WP), respectively. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the similarities and differences in the transitivity process types employed in the PDI and the WP editorials?
2. What are the predominant process types employed in the editorials of the two newspapers?

1.4 Theoretical Framework

Halliday’s (2008) transitivity system involving six processes served as the framework for this study. The material process, a process of doing, usually describes concrete and tangible actions. The process expresses the notion that a participant, the Actor, “does” something – which may be done “to” some other participant, the Goal.

Second, the mental process accounts for the process of sensing and involves not material actions but phenomena best described as states of mind or psychological events. A mental process should have two participants: the Senser (endowed with consciousness) and the Phenomenon (realized as a thing or as a fact).

Next, the relational process, a process of being, serves to establish a relation between two separate entities. As the term “relational” suggests, something is being said to “be” something else in relational clauses. There are two types of relational processes: the attributive relational process with the Carrier and the Attribute as the participants, and the

identifying relational process with the Identified and the Identifier as the participants.

Fourth, the behavioral process is typically human physiological and psychological behavior. Normally, a behavioral process has only one participant: the human Behavior. Being partly like the material process and the mental process, the behavioral process is the least distinct of all the six process types, especially in the language of science. Fifth, the verbal process is the process of saying. It characteristically involves three participants: the Sayer, the Receiver, and the Verbiage. The Sayer, the participant responsible for the verbal process, is typically but not necessarily conscious. The Receiver is the participant to whom the saying is directed. Nouns expressing verbal behavior such as question, story, and report characterize the Verbiage.

Last, the existential process represents existence or happening through a process and a participant that is being said to exist, the Existent. Generally speaking, the existential process is realized by the There-construction in English, which has no representational function. In addition, no human participants are involved in the existential process.

Table 1 shows the principal criteria for distinguishing the process types as posited by Halliday (2008).

Table 1
Halliday's (2008) criteria in determining the process types

Process Type	Category Meaning	Participant	Example
material: action event	'doing' 'doing' 'happening'	Actor, Goal	Mother kicked the ball. Actor goal Niko hit the ball very hard. (circumstantial)
Behavioral	'behaving'	Behavior	Mona (Behavior) is crying.
mental: perception affection cognition	'sensing' 'seeing' 'feeling' 'thinking'	Senser, Phenomenon	Cognition: I (Senser) don't understand his theory. (phenomenon) Affection: I (senser) fear the war. (phenomenon) Perception: I (senser) heard the music. (phenomenon)
Verbal	'saying'	Sayer, Target	He (sayer) said <u>he was tired</u> . (Verbiage)
relational: attribution identification	'being' 'attributing' 'identifying'	Token, Value Carrier, Attribute Identified, Identifier	Intensive Attributive - Niko (carrier) is talented. (Attribute) Intensive Identifying - Niko (Token) is the president. (Value)
Existential	'existing'	Existent	There was <u>a little house</u> (existent) <u>on the big prairie</u> . (Circumstance)

Some other examples of the behavioral process are sit, dance, sing, lie, down (near material processes); think, watch, look, listen (near mental processes); talk, gossip, grumble, chatter (near verbal processes); smile, laugh, cry, frown (physiological processes expressing states of consciousness); and sleep, breathe, cough, yawn (other physiological processes) (Halliday, 1994).

Some clauses though can be classified under more than one type of process, depending on their use in the text. Clauses with verbs, such as *suggest* and *indicate*, can be categorized as relational processes when the nominal elements in the transitivity structure are abstractions, or as mental processes when the meaning of the verb is making us think that. In the latter sense, the verbs are sources of projections according to Halliday and Martin (1993). For example:

As a remedy, the United States instituted the H-1B visa program. (Relational process)

As a remedy, the United States has instituted the H-1B visa program. (Mental process)

Similarly, the clause with the verb *estimated* is a verbal process when it has an explicit Sayer and projects what is said; but it is a relational process when it relates abstract nominal elements. For example:

US Geological Survey report estimated that deposits of 122 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 1.7 billion barrels of oil lie off the coast of Israel and under the Gaza Strip. (Verbal)

US Geological Survey estimated deposits of 122 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 1.7 billion barrels of oil lie off the coast of Israel and under the Gaza Strip. (Relational)

The frequent use and the presence or absence of the six process types of a text could mean various implications. Hu (1994) explains that the use of a relatively larger proportion of a certain type of process is one of the elements reflecting the text characteristics. Hu further explicates that the material process as the dominant type characterizes technical directions and medical instructions; the verbal process ranks after the material process in English broadcasting; the existential process usually appears in the description of travel notes; and the mental process is mainly used in literary works to reveal the personality of relevant figures.

2. Method

2.1 Study Corpus

Fifteen (15) editorials from PDI constituted the Philippine corpus, while 15 editorials were taken from WP for the American corpus. The PDI is the most widely read broadsheet in the Philippines (Philippine Primer, 2016). On the other hand, the WP is an American daily newspaper that covers general-interest topics with emphasis on American politics. The editorials for this study were published on the following specific dates: February 27, 28, 29; March 1-18 and 31; and April 1, 2 of 2016.

The researchers chose the data in order to cover different pressing issues in society in three succeeding months of the same year. Generally, the selected data were classified as editorials of criticism and argumentation. The reason for selecting these editorials rests on the notion that these types, which are similar to editorials of attack, can stimulate interest of readership and call for change and action on serious issues. In this paper, the data, which were labeled as PDI and WP, were presented in simple frequency counts. Table 1 shows the titles of the editorials used as study corpus.

Table 2
Editorial titles used as study corpus

WP	PDI
(1) The First Shipment of Crude since the Embargo was Lifted in Israel	(1) Restitution Required
(2) Dig Your Own Grave	(2) PPP'S Big Loss
(3) Should a Judge Rule on his Own Case?	(3) Start of the Binay's Political Demise
(4) Supreme Court Looks at Recusals in Capital Trials	(4) Election Eyesore
(5) Inside the Clinton's Plan to Defeat Donald Trump	(5) Say It Like It is
(6) An All Out Assault	(6) China's Ratchet Job
(7) HIV Toll on Black and Latino Men	(7) Reclaim Edsa
(8) The Sad Demise of the Summer Job	(8) Making it Real
(9) Donald Trump 'really not prepared to be president'	(9) Teasers
(10) A Better Way To Control The Banks	(10) Vote of Confidence
(11) A Georgia Bill Shields Discrimination Against Gays	(11) Filipino Tragedy
(12) I'm not a Super Predator	(12) Startling Bigotry
(13) Why Should 'Never Trump' Mean?	(13) To the Debate
(14) Brazil's Political Crisis Deepens	(14) Summit and Reality
(15) Growing Terrorism in Pakistan	(15) Drought and Water

2.2 Data Analysis

Based on Halliday's (1981) definition of transitivity (the grammar of the clause and as a structural unit for expressing a particular range of ideational meanings), the identification of the process types employed in the clauses of the two sets of corpora was set. The six processes defined by Halliday (2008), i.e., material, relational, mental, behavioral, verbal, and existential, were identified and categorized strictly based on the process categorization, process definition, and instantiation for process types set by Halliday. The help of an intercoder, who validated 30% of the data, was sought to guarantee the validity and reliability of the results.

An example of data analysis is shown below.

In 2015, about 500 information technology employees at Southern California Edison were laid off, and were told they had to show the ropes to new hires recruited by contractors in India or lose their earned severance pay.

In the example identified as one clause, the underlined “*were laid off*” and “*were told*” are processes of “doing” with the goal “*employees,*” and “*they had to show the ropes to new hires recruited by contractors in India or lose their earned severance pay*” was a process of “saying” as it expressed what were told; thus, the clause was found with material and verbal processes. The clauses were marked according to the types of process identified. The frequencies of the process types were counted manually and recorded.

3. Results and Discussion

A total of 725 clauses taken from PDI and WP were analyzed. All the six process types appeared in the selected editorials. The PDI editorials were found to have a total of 411 clauses, while the WP corpus had 314 clauses. It could be inferred that the PDI editorials had longer sentences as compared with the WP editorials. As a whole, the PDI editorials had marked high frequency of material process with 140, whereas the WP editorials were found to have high frequency of relational process (91) used. Moreover, in the WP editorials, material process ranked second with 83 occurrences, followed by mental (61), verbal (53), existential (20), and behavioral (6). Meanwhile, in the PDI editorials, relational process was the second most frequently used type, followed by mental (50), behavioral (35), existential (29), and verbal (25).

Table 3
Frequencies of the six process types employed in the WP and PDI editorials

	WP Editorials	PDI Editorials
Material	83	140
Mental	61	50
Relational	91	132
Verbal	53	25
Existential	20	29
Behavioral	6	35
Total	314	411

Table 3 shows the six process types utilized in WP and PDI, which both have material, mental, and relational processes as the most frequently used. From the said types, the relational, mental, process has the highest frequency with 91 for WP; while in the case of PDI, the material process is most frequently used with 140. Meanwhile, both newspapers have the behavioral process as the least frequently used type with six and 35 for WP and PDI, respectively.

Material Process

The material process type was most frequently used in the PDI samples. Such a result is congruent with the findings of Yang (2001) and Wu (2004) in their studies of journalistic English news and editorials, and sports news, respectively, which found a high percentage of material processes. Out of 140 clauses of material processes in the PDI editorials, 98 had the Actors as the Subjects. The use of the Actor as the doer or subject of the clause rather than the Goal as the subject may hint the writer's intention to focus the attention to who "does" and not to what is being done. This function is shown in these examples:

- (1) *The court of Appeals granted the petition of the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) to freeze the bank and other accounts of VP Binay. (PDI-3)*
- (2) *Also in 2013, the Comelec, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and then Department of the Interior and Local Government formed a watchdog group to monitor and arrest those who were littering the landscape. (PDI-4)*

In the examples given, *The court of Appeals*, *the Comelec*, and *the Department of Environment and the Department of the Interior and Local Government* are all Actors, and with the presence of the concrete verbs *granted* and *formed*, they may give a strong implication about the personal intention of the writer to reveal the identities of those responsible for the actions. Hu (1994) explains that a text will contain a variety of transitivity process types; but the material process will predominate because the material world is the foundation in nature, and the human activity is the fundamental guarantee of human existence. Meanwhile, the material process in the WP editorials was relatively high as well. Of the 83 marked material processes in these samples, 46 had the Actors as the Subjects in the clauses. Therefore, such findings, like those in the PDI editorials, put emphasis on the Actors or the doer of actions.

Relational Process

Relational processes were found to be predominantly employed in the WP editorial samples. According to Halliday (2000), the relational process is essentially a process of being and the relationship between two things or concepts. Halliday (2000) subcategorized the relational process into Intensive Attributive, which basically suggests the relationship of "x carries attribute y" where quality, classification, or adjective is assigned to a participant (carrier); and Intensive Identifying where "x serves to define the identity of y." In this study, the intensive attributive was found dominant in the relational process to describe rather than identify the participant (carrier). The following extracts illustrate the use of the relational process:

- (3) *They were confident that his incendiary remarks about immigrants, women and Muslims would make him unacceptable to many Americans. (WP-5)*

- (4) *Marco Rubio's loss in Florida was a big setback, leaving two challengers to Mr. Trump.* (WP-13)

In extract (3), the Carriers “*They*” and “*Muslims*” are described as “*confident*” and “*unacceptable*,” respectively, and in extract (4), the Carrier “*Marco Rubio's loss*” is described “*a big setback*.” Both attributes *confident* and *unacceptable* present the readers with information about the Carriers. Through descriptions of the people involved in the editorial, the readers may fully understand why the writers come out with a stand or reaction, and they get to familiarize themselves with the key players in an issue. Halliday (1985) also posits that in scientific writing, the relational process perhaps tends to be the most informative process. An editorial, like any scientific writing, has texts of description, argumentation, or exposition; hence, the relational process is favored. The descriptiveness and preciseness of an editorial can be attributed to relational process as it serves to characterize and to identify (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The frequency of relational processes in the PDI samples is higher than that of the WP samples (91) and shows a slight difference to material processes of the PDI editorials (132).

The PDI editorials, like the WP editorials, prefer the intensive attributive relational process to describe the Subject (Carrier), which could be a straightforward expression of views about relevant issues. There is a strong implication of detachment of readers' focus on identifying the “*who*”; instead, the readers' focus was directed to the attributes that create impact by knowing the descriptions of the topics. This is shown in these examples:

- (5) *But the CSIS analysis is right: The long term goal of denying access to the area, including two large parts of the West Philippine Sea is clear.* (PDI-6)
- (6) *The “Vizconde massacre” is among the high-profile criminal cases in the country that remain open-ended.* (PDI-11)

In these clauses, the readers are provided with some necessary information about the subject under discussion that give strong support for the argumentation to be made. In this case, relational processes are semantically impersonal, for they show the relation between two concepts and do not involve human participants in their transitivity structure, thus, making the presented information more objective, impersonal, and factual (Halliday, 2000; Martinez, 2001).

Mental Process

The mental process accounts for the process of sensing and involves not material actions but phenomena best described as states of mind or psychological events. A mental process should have two participants, namely, the Senser (endowed with consciousness) and the Phenomenon (realized as a thing or as a fact) (Halliday, 2000). The mental process was found to be a frequent process type in the WP editorials. The frequency of the mental processes in the WP samples was higher (61) than that of the PDI editorials (50). The following examples show the use of the material process in the WP editorials:

- (7) *Some conservative leaders see Mr. Cruz as their best chance for maintaining their influence. (WP-2)*
- (8) *Astonishingly, however, she appears to have felt she had political capital to spare last week when she appointed her predecessor and political mentor, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, to be chief of staff, a move that largely shields him for now from prosecution in the corruption scandal involving his ties to giant construction companies. (WP-14)*

In example (7), the Senser “*conservative leaders*” endowed with consciousness, “*see*” the perception and “*Mr. Cruz as their best chance for maintaining their influence*” the phenomenon, may give an implication that WP editorials tend to use mental processes to persuade readers as strongly indicated by the Senser’s perception of events. Mental processes often relate human being’s consciousness and are viewed for subjectivity. Although American writers are known for maintaining objectivity and impartiality, the present study found that their use of mental processes revealed the persuasive strategy they employed in writing editorials. Meanwhile, example (8) conveys that the Senser “*she*” is perceived (“*appears*” the perception) “*to have felt she had political capital*” (phenomenon). The use of mental processes here is perceived as an effective strategy to make the readers believe in the ideas of the Senser. Wu (2004) confirms the persuasive function of mental processes in his study of English email used for academic discussion. The use of the material process in the WP editorials, which ranked third among the six process types, may prove that American editorialists attempt to persuade the readers to accept their ideas.

In the PDI editorials, mental processes ranked fourth among the process types, which would imply the writers’ preference in using this type in argumentation. The two extracts below illustrate the use of the mental process in the PDI editorials.

- (9) *Should Davao City Mayor Rody Duterte run for president and win, the Philippines might become one of the safest destinations in the world for tourists. (PDI-4)*
- (10) *Binay’s answer reflected current political conditions. A family that has been in public office over a long period of time enjoys what is called brand equity. (PDI-8)*

Examples (9) and (10) show the mental processes employed in the PDI samples. The verbs “*might become*” and “*reflected*” (perception) suggest what is perceived or predicted about “*Philippines*” (phenomenon) and the notion of how “*current political conditions*” (phenomenon) are seen in “*Binay’s answer*” (Senser), respectively. On the other hand, the verb “*enjoys*” (affective) reflects the strong liking for “*what is called brand equity*” (phenomenon) by “*family*” (Senser). Thus, the mental processes frequently used in both the WP and the PDI editorials make the readers believe and accept the writers’ ideas.

Behavioral Process

Behavioral processes were least frequently used in the WP editorials (6), while PDI editorials (35) had a relatively high frequency of the said process type. The following extracts show the use of the behavioral process in the PDI editorials:

- (11) *These and other actions have taken place while China's neighbors protested.* (PDI-6)
- (12) *When he threatened to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law the Inquirer if this paper published the freezing of the assets of Jojo Binay et al.* (PDI-4)

The behavioral process typically reflects a human physiological and psychological behavior. This process has only one participant: the human Behavior. The verbs in the given examples “*protested*” and “*threatened*” may suggest the Behavers’ (i.e., “*China’s neighbors*” and “*he*”) state of mind to be a crucial factor in the editorials’ aim to expose reality as it happens. The near absence of behavioral processes in the WP editorials may give the impression that writers avoid expressing their personal view on the psychological behavior of human agents, as gleaned from the following examples:

- (13) *The woman won the legal battle and remained in her home.* (WP-5)
- (14) *They toyed with phrases from a now infamous speech Clinton gave in 1996.* (WP-12)

The verbs “*remained*” and “*toyed*” in the above examples were not as intense as the verbs “*protested*” and “*threatened*” used to reflect a psychological behavior of the Behavior in the PDI editorials. The behavioral process is the least salient among Halliday’s six process types. This was proven in Zheng’s (2014) study, which excluded behavioral processes from the statistical analysis because their extremely low percentage of occurrence would not affect the results.

Verbal Process

The verbal process occurred more in the WP editorials (53) than in the PDI editorials (25). The participants of this process are the Sayer (participant who speaks), the Receiver (the one to whom verbalization is addressed), and the Verbiage (what is said).

- (15) *At an oral argument on Monday, the lawyer for Pennsylvania argued that a rule requiring recusal for former prosecutors would not be realistic, because many judges have prior experience as prosecutors.* (WP-3)

The Verbiage in the example may have assured the reliability of the text based on the sources presented. Thus, the WP editorials deem it crucial to cite sources to prove

the credibility of information conveyed in editorial writing. Yang (2004), in her study of political news, also found that the use of verbal processes in the speeches of government officials or in their answers to journalists' questions was high, which indicates that the use of verbal processes could reflect the authority of the news. In the same way, the Sayer in the WP editorials such as "*the lawyer from Pennsylvania*" stimulates authority, reliability, and persuasiveness. The extract below illustrates the use of the verbal process in one PDI editorial.

- (16) *Public Works Secretary Rogelio Singson said it was the concerned agencies way of supporting the 'anti-epal' campaign, or the citizens' call on politicians not to use government projects as accessory resources to drumbeat their accomplishments at the expense of taxpayer money. (PDI-4)*

It is also interesting to note that the identities of the Sayers in the PDI samples were revealed unlike in the WP editorials in which common nouns were used to anonymize the speakers.

Existential Process

Existential processes concern whether or not something exists or happens (Halliday, 2000). This process type was found with low frequency both in the WP (20) and the PDI editorials (29) compared with the other process types in the corpus. The following examples show the existential process used in the WP and the PDI editorials:

- (17) *There is encouraging news in the fight against HIV in the United States. (WP-7) Yet there's been no real effort by "Never Trump" leaders on Mr. Kasich's behalf.*
- (18) *For all the well-documented brutality and heinousness of his late father's rule- the numbers, the stories, the facts are there. (PDI-1)*
- (19) *Because the accounts in 242 banks and securities and insurance accounts are there for public to see. (PDI-1)*
- (20) *To be sure, there are valiant efforts to remind people of the tens of thousands of men and women abducted, tortured, killed, or simply made to disappear by the Marcoses. (PDI-7)*

The purpose of an editorial is not only to argue and persuade readers to accept what the writers believe but to make the editorial informative as well, and for this purpose, existential processes in the text could be important to present facts and prove that something actually happened and really existed. However, the WP and the PDI editorials employed a few existential processes, which may imply the restrictions set in the minds of the writers to rather criticize or comment on an event or an issue than merely report something that

existed or happened. It seems that the readers are more interested in knowing what were done to someone and why such happened. However, existential processes are often used to denote and emphasize objectivity (Jin, 1996). In examples (17), (18), (19), and (20), the Existents, “*encouraging news, the facts, the accounts in 242 banks and securities and insurance accounts*” and “*valiant efforts*” are the only participants presented to distance the writers from the discourse in order to focus the readers’ attention to the arguments, thus, maintaining objectivity.

4. Conclusion

This paper investigated the similarities and differences in stylistic features of PDI and WP editorials using Halliday’s (2000) transitivity method.

This study found that the WP editorials used more relational, material, mental, and verbal processes, while the PDI editorials employed more material, relational, mental, and behavioral processes. The two, however, showed similarity in the use of mental (ranking third) and existential (ranking fifth) process types. Nonetheless, all the process types appeared in the two sets of editorials. While WP preferred verbal over behavioral, PDI preferred behavioral to verbal processes.

Based on the results, the stylistic features of the WP editorials give more emphasis on people’s character and attribute, which are important elements of the argumentative nature of editorials. The Americans’ culture of saying how they feel and think about people and events as objectively as possible by giving specific descriptions and identifications were reflected in the relational processes the editorialists employed. On the other hand, the PDI editorials focus on ‘what is done to someone’ and ‘who does it.’ In several editorial topics, Filipino writers tend to point fingers, holding specific people responsible for the irregularities committed in particular government transactions. Furthermore, the similar process types found in both sets of editorials could be attributed to the fact that Filipino writers were taught English the American way and standards. Some Filipino writers were exposed to the American culture of straightforward or direct-to-the-point manner of expression. Thus, though many Filipino writers have matured in their writing styles, they still follow certain American writing conventions, which they find more comfortable to use. Moreover, the presence of verbal and less of behavioral processes in the WP editorials would give a notion that the newspaper would focus on the information relayed in the Verbiage and the sources of evidence to stimulate readers’ interest toward the information. The presence of behavioral processes in the PDI editorials tends to implicate the Filipino style of affecting the emotional aspect of readers. Using words that reflect certain behaviors such as hostility, violence, charity, and the like can draw such emotional response from the readers. In addition, Filipinos are known for their interest to engage in ‘talks’ about people and their behavior.

This study put forward that the transitivity system could be an effective tool to analyze the stylistic features of editorials. The results also revealed that in the application of process types, the stylistic features of editorials related to the expected or commonly observed style and purposes of editorials, i.e., informative, persuasive, argumentative, and purposive, could be realized.

The results of the present investigation validated the findings of similar studies on the use of the transitivity method and proved that the frequent use or the mere presence or

even absence of the six process types of a text could have various implications. Hu (1994) in his book, *Discourse Cohesion and Coherence*, states that the use of a relatively larger proportion of a certain type of the transitivity process is one of the elements reflecting the text characteristics. A study by Zheng, Yang, and Ge (2014) revealed that transitivity system plays an important role in realizing the stylistic features of English-medium medical research articles and that the application of different process types in the articles' different sections may be attributed to the purposes and style requirements of each section.

Since the corpus for the present study is relatively limited, the findings may not be sufficient to conclusively prove the similarities and differences between the PDI and the WP editorials. It is suggested, therefore, that a larger set of data be employed to validate the findings of this study.

Pedagogical Implications

The study of stylistic features through the transitivity method provides some pedagogical implications. Stylistic analysis through the said method can help students have a sense of direction in analyzing the content, relevance, and essence of an editorial. Studying stylistic analysis may also aid them as writers to be aware of the proper use of process types, and in doing so, realize their role as writers and be more perceptive of the readers' expectations. The use of transitivity can be a new avenue for these students to develop their critical thinking and skills in making sound judgments on serious topics. Meanwhile, in understanding the transitivity method, teachers can guide their students in the process of editorial writing. As a result, the students can develop certain appropriate styles in writing. Being knowledgeable about the similarities and differences of Philippine and American stylistic features as reflected in the PDI and WP editorials, respectively, both the teachers and the students can consider understanding the process types they prefer to employ in their editorials and, thus, avoid personal biases. Lastly, the similarities found in the use of the process types between the two cultures in this study will be an encouragement for Filipino students to write for American audience and vice-versa.

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