

# Exploring Paz Marquez-Benitez' *Dead Stars*: A Linguistic Journey Through Transitivity Analysis

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**Abstract.** This study analyzed the first modern short story written in English in the Philippines, *Dead Stars* by Paz Marquez-Benitez through Systemic Functional Linguistics using Transitivity analysis. This study aims to understand how language is used to represent actions, participants, and their contexts, serving as a powerful tool for uncovering meaning and patterns of communication. The study made use of the qualitative research design integrating a detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the short story. From the analysis, material processes appear to be the most dominant processes; actor emerges as the most dominant type of participant; and manner appears frequently in circumstantial elements. Further, the study uncovers deeper meanings and ideological stances shedding light on how language is used to establish the to convey the story's themes, character relationships, and personal dilemmas—ultimately enhancing our appreciation of both language and literature

**Keywords:** systemic functional linguistics, transitivity analysis, ideational meaning, material, *Dead Stars*

## Introduction

Language plays a central role in human life. It is the primary means by which people express thoughts, share emotions, communicate ideas, and connect with others. Beyond communication, language also helps individuals define their identity, preserve culture, convey history, and engage in society. As Bloor and Bloor (2004) observe, the way people use language—their choice of words and sentence structures—can shape meanings that are open to multiple interpretations.

Because of this powerful and dynamic role in human experience and social structures, language occupies a unique and meaningful place in literature. Literary texts often reflect the complexity of human emotions and experiences, offering readers deep and layered insights. This strong connection between language and literature highlights the importance of examining how linguistic structures contribute to storytelling (Pasaribu, Sinambela, & Manik, 2020).

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This study explores these connections through the lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), focusing on the transitivity processes in the classic Filipino short story *Dead Stars* by Paz Marquez Benitez. Similar studies, such as Sena's (2019) transitivity analysis of Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, reveal how narrative meaning and character depiction are shaped by specific process types and participants in the clause.

By analyzing the story's language use, the study aims to show how linguistic choices shape character development, convey themes, and create narrative depth. It contributes to ongoing conversations at the intersection of language and literature, and proposes a structured approach for applying SFL and transitivity analysis to works of fiction. Pioneered by Michael Halliday, SFL views language as a system of meaning that functions within social contexts. It examines how language operates through three metafunctions: ideational (what is happening), interpersonal (who is involved), and textual (how the message is structured). A key component of this framework is transitivity analysis, which looks at how actions, participants, and circumstances are expressed in language. Halliday (1994) identifies six types of processes—material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential—which help analyze how language represents experience.

SFL offers a valuable lens for literary analysis by providing tools to explore how language conveys meaning and emotion in texts (Syed et.al, 2020). It helps reveal how writers create imaginary worlds, build characters, and evoke powerful responses. Through this lens, linguistic analysis becomes a way to uncover the artistry behind a literary text's form and meaning (Hanifa & Ardi, 2023). By examining the transitivity patterns in *Dead Stars*, this study uncovers the linguistic strategies that reflect cultural values, societal expectations, and personal conflicts. It offers a deeper understanding of how language contributes to the story's emotional and thematic layers. Ultimately, this research shows how a careful study of language can illuminate the social, cultural, and narrative richness of literature.

The short story *Dead Stars* (1925) by Paz Marquez Benitez, considered the first modern English Philippine literature, represents a pivotal point in Philippine literary history. Its publication in the early 1920s marked a transition towards English as a medium for literary expression, contributing to the country's literary heritage (Grow, 1991). The short story revolves around a timeless tale that navigates the complex terrain of love, memory, and societal pressures. Although Paz Marquez Benitez's *Dead Stars* is a significant literary work in the Philippines, aside from literary analysis, no other research method has been used to study this piece. This research can contribute to a richer understanding of Filipino literature by demonstrating the intricate relationship between language and meaning within this cultural context. It can inspire further studies exploring the linguistic nuances of other Filipino literary works. For instance, transitivity analysis of works such as Bradbury's *There Will Come Soft Rains* (Mastiya et al., 2022) and Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* (Syed et al., 2020) showcases how closely grammar and ideology intertwine in fiction.

While most scholarship focuses on themes, characters, and historical context, this thesis prioritizes the linguistic dimension, offering a unique lens for analyzing the story. Furthermore, this study not only contributes to the academic discourse on the application of linguistic frameworks in literary analysis but also offers practical benefits. By examining linguistic nuances in this classic Filipino literary

text, students can develop sharper analytical skills and learn to interpret not just the story's plot but also the subtleties embedded in language choices. This study equips students with the ability to understand how authors convey emotions, develop characters, and construct narratives through language, thereby enhancing their own writing skills (Mishra, 2022). For educators, this approach opens up new avenues for teaching, encouraging interactive discussions and activities focusing on linguistic analysis—creating a dynamic learning environment that nurtures critical thinking and creativity among students (Jaelani, 'Abidat, Umam, & Rahmawanti, 2023).

### Previous Studies

Transitivity analysis, a core concept in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), has proven valuable across various domains of language research, particularly in pedagogy and discourse analysis. Its application has been instrumental in enhancing students' critical thinking and exposing them to authentic language use. For instance, Mahdi (2017), in *Material Process in Transitivity of Besemah Language Clauses: A Functional Grammar Approach*, explores material processes in Besemah clauses using a Functional Grammar framework. His study categorizes verb clauses into intransitive, monotransitive, and ditransitive forms, offering structured insights into participant roles and process types.

Meanwhile, Munalim (2017), in *Mental Processes in Teachers' Reflection Papers: A Transitivity Analysis in Systemic Functional Linguistics*, analyzes teacher reflections to uncover the interplay of material, relational, and higher-order mental processes such as cognition and desire. This study reveals how linguistic choices mirror introspective thought in pedagogical narratives. Complementing these, Zhang (2017) applies transitivity analysis to multimodal political discourse in *Transitivity Analysis of Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's First Television Debate*. Her research highlights how material, relational, mental, and notably existential processes are strategically deployed in public speech to influence audience perceptions—underscoring the interpersonal function of language.

A synthesis of these works reveals a common emphasis on how transitivity processes shape meaning, whether in everyday communication, professional reflection, or political persuasion. However, while existing studies broadly investigate language in educational and political contexts, they offer limited focus on how transitivity functions within fictional narratives—especially in regional literature.

The present study addresses this gap by applying transitivity analysis to *Dead Stars* by Paz Marquez Benitez, a foundational work in Philippine literature. Unlike prior research that spans diverse contexts or general literary texts, this study narrows its lens to a single, culturally significant short story. By doing so, it offers a focused exploration of how language structures in *Dead Stars* reveal ideational meanings, character portrayals, and social tensions embedded in early 20th-century Philippine society. This targeted approach not only expands the applicability of SFL to literary studies but also contributes to the representation of Philippine literary heritage in linguistic scholarship.

## Method

This study employed a qualitative research design, guided by the principles outlined by Creswell (2013). Creswell emphasizes that qualitative methods allow for a rich and in-depth exploration of data, making them particularly suitable for examining the linguistic features of texts. This approach was chosen to capture the complexities and nuances of language use, especially within the framework of Systemic Functional Analysis.

In analyzing the literary text *Dead Stars* by Paz Marquez Benitez, qualitative methods facilitated a close reading of the text's linguistic subtleties, enabling the researchers to explore its layered meanings. Focusing on clauses as units of analysis aligned with the qualitative approach, allowing for a detailed examination of how language constructs meaning and represents actions, characters, and contextual dynamics. By immersing themselves in this analytical process, the researchers uncovered the multiple layers embedded within the text's clauses, revealing how linguistic choices contribute to the story's narrative and thematic depth.

The extracted clauses from *Dead Stars* were systematically categorized into three key components of transitivity analysis under the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework: processes, participants, and circumstances. The first step involved identifying and classifying linguistic elements in accordance with SFL principles. Clauses expressing actions were coded as material, mental, or other process types. Participants were identified as the individuals or entities involved in those actions, while circumstances—such as time, place, and manner—were recognized to contextualize the events more fully.

To ensure objectivity, the researchers adopted an etic stance, aiming to minimize personal biases and cultural assumptions. This perspective allowed for greater neutrality during interpretation, strengthening the credibility and reliability of the study's findings.

## Findings and Discussion

This section serves as a bridge between the raw data collected from the text and the subsequent discussion that examines the implications and significance of the findings. It lays the groundwork for a deeper exploration of *Dead Stars* and sets the stage for a comprehensive understanding of Paz Marquez Benitez's storytelling craft.

### Process Types

The following table is a key component of this research, as it presents the analysis of process types in the short story *Dead Stars*. This analysis was conducted on 288 clauses. In systemic functional linguistics, processes are the actions or states performed by participants in a clause. The table categorizes these processes into different types and provides their frequency of occurrence as well as the percentage distribution, offering a clear and comprehensive view of the linguistic structure of the story.

**Table 1. Process Types of Transitivity Analysis in the short story *Dead Stars***

Process Types	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentages (%)
Material	119	41.32
Mental	116	40.28
Relational	27	9.38
Behavioral	4	1.39
Verbal	22	7.64
Existential	0	0
Total	288	100

From the table above, the Material process is shown to have the highest frequency of occurrence among the six processes, with a total of 119 (41.32%) occurrences. The material processes typically involve the actions or doings that the characters perform in a narrative. Mental Process follows this with 116 (40.28%) occurrences. Mental Process depicts the cognitive and emotional experiences of the characters. On the other hand, the Relational process occurs twenty-seven (27) times (9.38%), which involves depicting relationships between entities or identifying attributes. Moreover, as observed, there are no Existential processes in the analysis.

### Participant Functions

Participant elements are typically realized by nominal groups. Each process has a special sort of participants; therefore, by knowing the participants, we can also know the types of processes and the other way around. In the short story analyzed, 256 participant functions were identified. The frequency and percentage distribution of these participant functions are shown in the table below. This data provides insight into the many roles and activities in the short story *Dead Stars*.

**Table 2. Participants Functions of Transitivity Analysis in the short story *Dead Stars***

Participant Function	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentages (%)
Actor	97	37.89
Goal	7	2.73
Recipient	29	11.33
Client	0	0
Initiator	1	0.39
Scope	0	0
Senser	50	19.53
Phenomenon	13	5.08
Carrier	23	8.98
Attribute	10	3.91
Identified	1	6.39
Identifier	5	1.95
Bahaver	30	11.71
Bahavior	0	0
Existent	21	8.20
Sayer	37	14.45
Target	24	9.38
Receiver	1	0.39
Verbiage	4	1.56
Total	256	100%

The table shows that the most dominant participant function is the actor, with 97 (37.89%) frequencies. This high frequency aligns with the most dominant type of process, which is the Material process, as actors typically engage in actions or events within the narrative. Certain participant functions, such as Initiator, Scope, and Behavior, have negligible frequencies or are entirely absent.

### Circumstantial Elements

As Arina Isti'anah (2015) points out, the occurrence of a circumstance in a clause can take on a multitude of forms. Eggins (2004) further elaborates that circumstances can be associated with all process types and are often marked by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases. Downing and Locke (2006) provide a comprehensive summary, highlighting that circumstances can be related to place and time, manner, instrument, contingency, accompaniment, modality, degree, role, matter, and evidence. This wide range of meanings covers everything from cause, purpose, reason, concession, to behalf. In the narrative of *Dead Stars*, this diversity is vividly illustrated with the discovery of 337 circumstantial elements, each adding a unique layer to the story.

**Table 3. Circumstantial Elements of Transitivity Analysis in the short story *Dead Stars***

Circumstantial Element	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentages (%)
Extent	29	11.57
Location	68	20.18
Manner	161	47.77
Cause	19	5.64
Accompaniment	1	0.30
Matter	0	0
Rôle	21	6.23
Contingency	5	1.48
Angle	4	1.19
Time	19	5.64
Total	337	100%

The table above presents the analyzed frequencies of the circumstantial elements found in *Dead Stars*. The table shows the most dominant circumstantial element found in the short story, and it is analyzed that *manner* has the highest frequency of 161 (47.77%).

To further analyze how each element of transitivity functions in the short story *Dead Stars*, the researchers

examined how the elements create the story's ideational meaning. The data below are shows different processes with participant and circumstantial elements.

#### a. Material Process

Material processes indicate activities or events that happen within the surroundings or environment of the character/person (Saragih, 2010). Halliday (1994) states that material processes are processes of *doings* and *happenings*, which include actions, activities, and events. Matthiessen and Halliday (1997) also proposed that the material process is an arrangement of a process involving participants that requires some energy input to occur and when the participant is likely to undertake a change. Thus, the energy flow marks the material process. Further, Halliday (2004) points out that the material clauses construe the procedure

as a sequence of concrete changes; these are elements in sentences that focus on actions and how things change.

In the analysis of the short story *Dead Stars*, Material processes emerge as the most dominant process, with a total frequency of 119 occurrences, representing approximately 41.32% of the identified processes. This data underscores the story's focus on characters actively engaging in actions and events, which propel the plot forward and shape the course of their relationships and experiences. The participant functions associated with material processes offer valuable insights into the roles and agency of characters within the story. The *actor*, 'as the primary agent of material actions, is depicted with 97 occurrences (37.89%). The *Goal*, 'the participant that drives the narrative forward through their actions and decisions, occurs seven times (2.73%). *Recipients*, on the other hand, often serve as the targets or recipients of these actions, experiencing the consequences of the characters' behaviors.

#### Data 1

He	laughed	with her.
Actor	Material	Circumstances

The data above is taken from line 97 of the story. The above sentence is taken from the interaction between Alfredo and Julia Salas, where Alfredo thinks that Julia is the judge's sister. The pronoun *He* refers to Alfredo as he laughs at the story told by Julia. The verb *laughed* indicates the manner of action performed by Alfredo as he interacts with Julia. The pronoun *He* is considered the actor, as he is the one performing the act of laughing. The preposition *with* establishes a relational connection between the sender, Alfredo, and the receiver of the action, Julia, which is indicated by the pronoun *her*. The phrase *with her* shows the *accompaniment circumstantial* element as it indicates to whom the actor is laughing with. The sentence above shows the material process as it indicates what the participant is *doing* (Halliday, 2004) in Alfredo's interaction with Julia.

#### Data 2

In the meantime,	He	became	Very much engaged	To Esperanza
Circumstance (Extent)	Participant (Actor)	Material		Participant (Recipient)

The data above is found within line 39-40 (refer to appendix 1). In this data, the prepositional phrase *in the meantime*, *plays a crucial role in* providing a temporal context and indicating a circumstantial element of *time*. The pronoun *he* in the data, refers to Alfredo as he sits inside his room, lost in his thoughts. The pronoun, *he*, serves as the participant (actor), as he is the one undergoing the action of *becoming engaged* in the interaction with Esperanza. The verb phrase *became very much engaged* signifies a change in the subject's state, with the adverb *very much* intensifying the adjective *engaged*. The preposition *to* introduces the object *Esperanza*, a proper noun naming the person to whom the subject is engaged with. This data is categorized as a material process, as it describes a dynamic action that

often implies a more changing process or event, resulting in a change of state or condition. Matthiessen and Halliday (1997) propose that material process is an arrangement of a process and participants involved, which is evident in the data above.

### b. Mental Process

According to Saragih (2010), mental processes refer to verbs indicating perception, cognition, affection, and desire. Furthermore, Halliday (2004) explains that mental clauses are concerned with our experience of the world of our own consciousness. There are two participants in mental processes: a *senser* and a *Phenomenon*. Halliday (2004) defines a *senser* as the one who senses, feels, thinks, and wants to perceive, while a *Phenomenon* is a participant who feels, thinks, wants, or perceives. In the story, the researchers identified 116 occurrences (40.28%) of mental processes.

Below are examples of the different functions of the elements:

#### Data 3

He	could not take his eyes	from her face.
Senser	Mental	Circumstance

The data above is an example of a clause that shows a mental process. Mental processes refer to verbs indicating perception, cognition, affection, and desire. The above scenario occurred when *he*, which refers to Alfredo, was having a conversation with Julia (signified by the pronoun *her*). The scene shows the reaction of Alfredo as he was captivated by Julia's face. Here, the pronoun *He* is the participant, specifically identified as the senser, experiencing a mental process indicated by the verb *could not take*, which signifies an inability to divert attention from the woman's face. This mental action is characterized by fixation or captivation. *He (Alfredo)* is identified as the senser because the sentence describes his feelings towards Julia.

Moreover, the phrase, *from her face* functions as a circumstantial element of location, providing additional information about the action described in the sentence. As Downing and Locke (2006) stated, the combination of the senser experiencing the mental process and the *circumstance* specifying the object of his attention defines the clause as a mental process. Further, mental processes are those through which a person organizes their thoughts with the world, and the data above shows Alfredo's internal state and emotional response, capturing his evident fascination with Julia Salas' face.

#### Data 4

He	felt	an impersonal curiosity creeping into his gaze.
Participant (Senser)	Mental	Circumstance (Manner)

The line above is taken from the same event as Data 3. In the data above, the sensation described is *curiosity*, which gradually enters his (Alfredo's) gaze, indicating a shift in his perception or focus toward the object of his interest. In this sentence, Alfredo discovered that Julia Salas is blushing and looking at him.



Alfredo, *who felt the impersonal curiosity*, is identified as the *senser* as he is the one who experiences the mental process described by the verb *felt*.

The circumstantial element of *manner (into his gaze)* adds context to the mental process by specifying how the curiosity is expressed. According to Halliday (2004), the mental process is the process of sensing or feeling. Thus, in data 233, line 512, the combination of the senser experiencing the mental process of *curiosity* and the circumstance specifying its expression in *his gaze* defines the clause as a mental process.

### c. Relational Process

The relational process construes *being* and *relation* among entities through *identification*, *attribution*, and *possession* (Saragih, 2010). There are two participants in the relational process: *Carrier* and *Attribute*.

#### Data 5

Greed	he thought	was	what ruined so many.
Participant (Carrier)	Circumstance (Manner)	Relational	Circumstance (Attribute)

The above data talks about the relational process that construes *being* and *relation* among entities through identification, attribution, and possession.

The sentence above is taken from the scene where Alfredo (indicated as *he*) has internal thoughts of how men's greed ruined so many things, as they are willing to sacrifice the present for something that is yet to happen or will not. The noun *Greed*, which is the carrier participant, acts as the main subject of Alfredo's thoughts.

The entire sentence revolves around the idea of greed and its impact on people and society. The use of the verb *ruined* highlights the devastation it causes and captures an important insight into human nature. Moreover, the phrase *so many* shows the relational aspect of greed and destruction by representing its multitude of effects.

The sentence is relational in nature, portraying the relationship between the action (greed) and its consequences on a group of individuals (Halliday, 2004).

#### Data 6

In the picture	something of eager freedom as of	wings poised	in flight.
Participant (Carrier)	Circumstance (Attribute)	Relational	Circumstance (Manner)

The data above is taken from lines 182-183, where Alfredo observes Julia Salas as they walk along the beach. In this scene, Alfredo describes Julia as something that resembles a free bird whose wings are poised as it flies.

Here, the nouns *picture* and *wings* anchor the imagery of Julia's physical attribute, while the verb *poised* adds movement. The word *eager* intensifies the sensation of freedom portrayed. The use of the preposition *in* and the article *the* indicates the manner of how Julia is seen by Alfredo. The phrase *of eager freedom* functions as an attribute by describing the object, identified with the indefinite

pronoun *something*, which can also be referred to as the attributes seen by Alfredo in Julia.

Moreover, the phrase *wings poised* (adjective) contains relational elements as it establishes a connection or relationship between how the wings appear (*poised*) as if they are in flight.

The data above shows a relational process that aligns with Halliday's (2004) framework of relational processes, where a link could be created between the carrier and its attribute through a detailed comparison.

#### d. Behavioral

The behavioral process deals with psychological and physiological activities that are part of human physical behavior (Gerrot & Wignell, 1994). Eggins (2004) says that behavioral processes are mid-way between materials on the one hand and mental on the other. Behaviors are parts of action, but they are actions that must be experienced by a conscious being. Furthermore, some behavioral, in fact, contrast with mental process synonyms, e.g., *look at* is behavioral but *see* is mental (Eggins, 2004). The participants found in behavioral relations are the Behavior and Behavioral. Four (4) behavioral processes are found in the short story, constituting 1.37% of the total processes identified. Moreover, out of the two behavioral relations, only Behavior is found.

#### Data 7

When he came up	she	flushed, then smiled	with frank pleasure
Participant (Actor)	Participant (Behaver)	Behavioral	Circumstances (Manner)

The data above is taken from line 178, in which Alfredo is walking towards Julia Salas on the beach. The table above shows the acts and behaviors that deal with psychological and physiological activities that state human physical behavior (Gerrot & Wignell, 1994). The adverbial phrase, *when he comes up*, provides the context for the action done by the behavior, she. The behavior in the data above is indicated by the pronoun *she*, which refers to Julia. Moreover, the verbs *flushed* and *smiled* describe Julia's actions/behavior upon seeing Alfredo. Both these mental processes show the positive emotional reaction of the behavior (Julia). Moreover, the description *frank pleasure* enhances the description of Julia's smile with genuineness and honesty, making it the circumstantial element of *manner*.

The data above shows a behavioral process that portrays a moment of interaction between two people, capturing emotional responses and actions. This sequence of actions and reactions depicts the interaction between the actor and the behavior in relation to Halliday's (2004) idea that a behavioral process in a sentence portrays a moment of interaction between two people, capturing emotional responses and actions.

#### Data 8

She	laughed
Participant (Behaver)	Behavioral

Data 8 is taken from the scene where Julia Salas and Alfredo are having a conversation with a conversation and the latter then said something that made Julia

laughed. In this data, *She (Julia)* is a *behaber*, identified as actor of the behavior/action (*laughed*) stated. The verb laugh is indicated as the act of producing sounds typically associated with amusement or happiness. The data presents a simple yet significant behavioral process wherein the behavior, *She (Julia)*, engages in the action of laughing, which reflects a specific emotional response. The data above is a Behavioral process as the action/behavior done is carried out by a conscious being in response to her environment/situation. (Eggins, 2004).

#### e. Verbal

As mentioned by Gerot and Wignell (1994), the verbal process is the process done through the action of *saying* and *signaling*. The use of a verbal process, thus, is seen as an appropriate way to convey the speaker's ideas to the addressee(s). There is always one participant representing the speaker called a *Sayer*, which in this study occurs 37 times (14.45%). The additional participants in verbal clauses are referred to as Receiver, Target, and Verbiage. In the story, Target occurs 24 times (9.38%), and Verbiage occurs 4 times (1.56%). On the other hand, the receiver is rarely found in short stories and only occurs once.

#### Data 9

"May is the month of happiness they say,"		she
Participant (Verbiage)		Participant (Sayer)
said with what seemed to him		a shade of irony
Verbal		Circumstances (Manner)

From the data above, the characters' verbal exchanges in these data show their levels of relationships and communication. This scene above is taken from the context of Alfredo asking Julia to come to his wedding with Esperanza in the coming month of May. *May is the month of happiness they say*, a phrase uttered by Julia (identified as the sayer *she*) is considered as verbiage as the phrase contains the message delivered by the sayer (Julia). In addition, the inclusion of *they say* suggests that it is a common saying or expression, contributing to its classification as verbiage. Moreover, the verb *said* shows this data as a verbal process as it indicates the act of speaking done by the participant(sayer). Lastly, the phrase *a shade of irony* is classified as a circumstantial element of *manner*, as it describes the style or tone in which the words are spoken by the sayer. In this case, the way Julia expresses her message suggests that there is a subtle hint of irony as she does not show enthusiasm or happiness with the idea of the coming month of May. This indicates a hint of sadness about Julio's upcoming marriage to Esperanza.

#### Data 10

"They say,"	slowly, indifferently	"would	you come?"
Participant (Verbiage)	Circumstances (Manner)	Verbal	Participant (Receiver)

The above data continues Julia and Alfredo's conversation, where Alfredo asks Julia to attend his upcoming wedding. In this sentence, the phrase *They say*, is identified as verbiage. This phrase is a common expression used to describe a statement without specifying a particular source. Moreover, this statement of Alfredo is his reply to Julia she said "*May is the month of happiness, they say*". Additionally, the adjectives *slowly* and *indifferently* are identified as the circumstantial elements of *manner* that describe Alfredo's tone as he responds to Julia. The manner in which Alfredo responds somehow indicates his aloofness towards Julia's statement, as if he does not fully agree with it. Further, Alfredo tried to change the topic of conversation by asking Julia if she would come to his wedding. The phrase "*Would you come?*" establishes this phrase as a verbal process as this indicates the message Alfredo wants to convey to the receiver Julia, who is the one referred to by the pronoun *you*. Moreover, *you* represent the person to whom the question is addressed, indicating that they are the intended recipient of the action or communication. The line above is identified as verbal as it involves the act of speaking or uttering words, specifically in the form of a question directed towards someone (Halliday, 2004).

After examining the short story *Dead Stars*, several significant findings can be formed. First, the concept of choice and action is highlighted by the dominance of *material processes* and *actor-participant roles*. The narrative's characters actively participate in various activities and events that contribute to the plot and influence the characters' experiences. Moreover, an abundance of *mental processes* and *senser participant* roles explore the cognitive and affective aspects of the characters, providing an understanding of their ideas, desires, and perceptions. This emphasizes how complex the minds of humans are and how crucial it is to comprehend the characters' motivations. Furthermore, relationships between people are emphasized by *relational processes and participant functions*, including goal, recipient, and attribute. The characters in the narrative explore different levels of intimacy, human connection, and identity, highlighting relationships' role in shaping their experiences.

In addition, the *verbal processes and sayer participant* functions are included to highlight the importance of interaction and communication in the story. Characters communicate their ideas, emotions, and intentions through speaking acts throughout dialogues and conversations. Lastly, the story is contextualized by circumstantial components like extent, location, method, and time, which enhance the narrative and improve readers' involvement. Overall, *Dead Stars* provides a more profound knowledge of the human condition and the difficulties of life and love by analyzing process types, participant functions, and circumstantial elements. These findings shed light on the themes of agency, cognition, relationships, communication, and contextualization.

## Conclusion

The data gathered through the analysis of *Dead Stars* by Paz Marquez Benitez has provided important insights into the story's structure and elements of the short story. From the analysis, the dominance of Material processes suggests a significant focus on actions and events within the story. In addition, Mental processes also hold a substantial presence and these processes go into characters' thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, enriching the narrative structure. Relational

processes, although less frequent, play a crucial role in establishing connections and character dynamics within the story.

Moreover, among participant functions, the role of the Actor emerges as the most dominant. This underscores the narrative's emphasis on characters actively engaging in actions and driving the plot forward. The functions of Sayer and Sayer follow closely behind, illustrating the importance of character perceptions and communication in shaping the narrative. Other functions such as Recipient and Behaver also contribute significantly, adding depth to character interactions and behaviors, thereby enriching the narrative.

In circumstantial elements, manners appeared more frequently than others, which indicates that the narrative pays more attention to the manner in which the actors perform their actions. By examining the actions, events, and interactions depicted within the story, the researchers gained insights into the deeper meanings and implications embedded within the text. The ideational analysis revealed important insights into the human experience, relationships, and personal dilemmas portrayed in the story.

This research opens a deeper understanding, not only on the Paz Marquez-Benitez' *Dead Star* but also on how different materials such as short story can be studied through the theoretical lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) more specifically, with transitivity analysis. Thus, the researchers recommends this study to be used in language and literature curricula to enhance students' understanding of narrative techniques and character development in literary texts using the analysis of transitivity processes and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

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