



Role of Languages in Modern Narrative and Characterization: Stylistic Comparison of Transitivity between *Mrs. Dalloway* and *[I] Am Probably Lost*

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Abstract

Comparative literature has long been concerned with studying similarities and differences in the literature of various cultures and languages. Its approach, like other approaches to literary criticism, is mostly focused on the non-linguistic aspects of the works compared. The present paper has tried to adopt a linguistic and stylistic analytical framework for the comparison of two modern novels from two languages: Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Salar's *[I] Am Probably Lost*. By referring to Halliday's model of transitivity, this research has analyzed and contrasted the two writers' stylistic choices of transitivity in the transitivity profiles of the heroines in English and Persian, respectively. In the examined excerpts, results showed that Salar had used 24.8% agentive material processes while Woolf's narrative included 10.9% such processes. Mental processes ranked first in Woolf's narrative with 3% more abundance compared to material processes whereas Salar had used mental processes +10% less than material processes. These results and the abundance percentage of other verbal processes were then interpreted based on Halliday's arguments about the effects of process abundance on character interpretation, and it was concluded that Mrs. Dalloway's transitivity profile was more apt for the expression of modern experience.

Keywords: Stylistics, transitivity, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *[I] Am Probably Lost*, modern fiction, narrative, characterization