

## Existential Process in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret*: A Systemic Functional Linguistic Study

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### Abstract

*Dealing with sense of experience people undergo, transitivity construes the process of the experiences. One of the processes in transitivity is discussed here, that is existential process. Qualitatively conducted, this research employs Hallidayan theoretical framework especially transitivity which covers six processes, they are material, mental, verbal, behavioural, relational and the last one is existential process. This process construes existence of matters such as people, things, events, actions and moments which are called as existent. Discussing process, this research focuses on clause because transitivity analysis lies on clauses. Basically, clauses found are not all in form of clause but some of them are taken from clause complex which are then broken down into clauses. Further, there are twenty clauses found engaging existential processes and dummy subject (there). Those processes are auxiliary verb or to be (was and were). Thus far, the existential processes construe two types of existent, they are entity and event. Thirteen of twenty clauses carry out the existent of entity which covers people and things while the rest construe the existent of event which covers action and moment. Another point found is circumstance; there are ten circumstances which are categorized into three types, they are circumstance of place, circumstance of time, and circumstance of manner (comparison).*

**Key Words:** *circumstance, existent, existential process, transitivity*

### Introduction

An English sentence or a clause must at least consist of a subject and a verb. Commonly, word categories taking role as a subject are noun and pronoun. It is not only in form of noun, but it is also in form of noun phrase, for instance “a beautiful lady”, “colorful kite”, and “fundamental theories”. The following sentences will show a noun or a noun phrase as the subject;

- [1] Apple has beneficial nutrition for human body.
- [2] Coke bottles are branded with a new name.
- [3] He posted an article on his blog.

It is noted that [Apple] is a noun functioning as a subject, then [Coke bottles] is a noun phrase and it functions as a subject too. The third sentence has two pronouns [He] and [his]. Thus, one of both taking role as a subject is [He]. Therefore, it is proven that noun and pronoun function as subject in a sentence. Delahunty et al (2010) probe that commonly subject of a sentence is in form of noun and pronoun. On the other hand, because of the need of a subject in an English sentence or clause, there are forms functioning as subjects but they do not give any influential meaning to the sentence or the clause. For instance;

- [4] It is a surprise that the book is cheap enough.
- [5] There are coke bottles in the refrigerator.

Both sentences employ two subjects (It) and (There). The word (it) is a pronoun, however, according to Gerot and Wignell (1995:72) and Bloor and Bloor (2004), it has no representational function in that sentence; it is required because of the need for a subject in English. Further, Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2001:135) posit that the pronoun (it) remains in the original place of the clause [4] called as a ‘slot-filler’ or ‘dummy subject’. In this case, the word (there) is also a dummy subject because it only takes a role as the subject and has no representational function. It always appears in a clause showing existences of entities just like what is found in the clause [5].

In the realm of Systemic Functional Linguistics, such clause is called as existential clause. In the clause [5], there are three components; existential, existent, and circumstance. The detail explanation of them will be

provided in the next point. Thus, what this research focuses is on existential clause. On the other hand, there is another case relating to the word (there) as exemplified and compared below:

- [6] There is your book right where you left it.
- [7] There is even a book about great Australian dunnies.

Even though both sentences employ the same word (there), each of them refers to a different function. The word (there) in clause [6] shows the place where the book is, therefore it is a circumstance. Nonetheless, the second (there) does not, it is a dummy subject. This phenomenon probes that the word (there) will not only refer to non-representational function but it also refers to a particular place. Therefore, it becomes one of the objectives of this research to identify and explain the existential clause employing dummy subjects.

Applying Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as the approach, the researcher used the term 'clause' to substitute 'sentence' since SFL places it on rank of sentence. In the realm of SFL, the ranks of language are morpheme, word, group of words, clause and clause complex. Further, the analyses of this research lied on clauses. Halliday (2014) supported by Eggins (2004), Lock (2005), and Sujatna (2013) posits that a clause has three components; participant, process, and circumstance. These components are also what this research tried to explore. Explicitly, two research questions this research has; 1) what are existents which occur in the existential process in the novel? 2) what are circumstances occur in the existential process?

There are also other previous research conducted by the researcher, the first one is "Mental and Relational Process of Transitivity in Donne's and Blake's Poem: A Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach". It reported that there are thirty four line indicating mental processes and twenty three relational processes. Further, this research showed that there are some verbs usually used to indicate mental process, those are love, honor, know, think, hear, see, repent, mind, want, fear, and dream. Then, there are four indications that are able to differentiate attributive relational process from identifying relational process, those are verb ( have and mean), articles (a/an and the), adjective (dead, tired, spent, young, bare, cold, joy, happy and warm), and circumstance of place. The second one is "Transitivity Analysis on Shakespeare's Sonnets". This research posits that there are four process types; they are material, mental, relational, and existential process. Further, it was also found that the material process more often appear than other processes.

There are moreover other researchers conducting such a transitivity analysis, two of them are Nguyen (2004), who applied transitivity analysis to characterize a character in a novel, and Sujatna (2013), who employed regional and national airline slogan to find the mood and the types of processes.

### Method of Research

Qualitatively this research is conducted, because this research emphasized aspects of meaning and experience which are built on context. Litoselliti (2003: 15), Crocker (2009) and Stake (2010) state that qualitative methods focus on aspect of meaning, process, and context (*why* and *how*) rather than *how many* or numerical matters. Another supporting reason is that this research is presented descriptively based on phenomena of existential processes found. This is in line with what Miles and Huberman (2003:41) talk about qualitative research, they probe that "qualitative research allows for inferential interpretation of narratively constructed, plural and interior realities". Focusing on clauses, this research took some data which are in form of clause and clause complex. Those clause complexes were broken down to find existential clause only. Further, the complete data can be found in the appendices. After identifying data, the researcher marked them with roman number referring to the order of the data and cardinal number referring to the page where the data were taken. For instance [I/1]; it means that it is the first datum taken from page 1 of the novel.

### Discussion

It is reported that there are twenty data found and five of them are parts of dialogue. It is noted as well that of those twenty data, there are ten clause complexes. Later, data presented in the discussion are in the form of clauses meaning that those clause complexes are broken down into clauses. It is because the analysis of transitivity lies on clause. Then, the unanalyzed parts of those clause complexes are omitted and marked with three dots construing that there are still other parts hidden. Regarding Halliday (2014), existential process carries out with two existents; they are objects (in this research it is called as entity) and events. Therefore, the discussion of the findings is divided into two parts; they are the existent of entity and event. Here is the discussion.

### Existent of Entity

The following clauses are presented with unusual space among parts of those clauses and boxes. Each box represents one part of each clause with its name. It is noted that the clauses found are begun with dummy subject i.e. 'there'. Among those data, there is a datum [I/7] which has a special case. It has its existent in form of determiner (more) which functionally is not an existent. However, regarding the context of this clause, this determiner refers to entities which mean that there are other things mentioned as additional matters of the previous one even though they are not written or mentioned.

Simply, those existents found and presented in this section are showing entities. For instance; datum [VI/41] has *a scrubbed wooden tables and chairs*, this existent construes things (table and chair). Another datum [VII/43] has *a big photograph*, it means a thing (photograph) referring to entity. Thus far, other existents *plenty of weed and the grass* [VIII/43-44], *some pretty nasty stuff* [X/46], *a loophole* [XI/46-47], *a list of new books* [XII/51], *a very small pile of silver sickles and just one golden Galleon* [XIII/66], *a thus of metal* [XIV/71], *a thin mist* [XIX/116], *a plot* [III/22], and *slight stiffness* [XVIII/96] construe things referring to entities. Here are the analyses showing the detail parts of existential process. All existential processes are in form of auxiliary verb (to be; was and were).

[I/7]            There            's            more            in the frying pan.

Existential	Existent	Circ. of place
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[VI/41]        There            was            a scrubbed wooden table and chairs    in the middle

Existential	Existent	Circ. of place
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[VII/43]        There            was            a big photograph    on the front of a very good- looking wizard ...

Existential	Existent	Circ.
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[VIII/43-44] There            were            plenty of weeds and the grass ...

Existential	Existent
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[X/46]            There            was            some pretty nasty stuff ...

Existential	Existent
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[XI/46-47]      There            's            a loophole            in the law

Existential	Existent	Circ.
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[XII/51]        There            was            also            a list of new books ...

Existential	Circ.	Existent
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[XIII/66]        There            was            a very small pile of silver Sickles    inside,    and just one gold Galleon

Existential	Existent	Circ.	Existent
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[XIV/71]        There            was            a thus of metal    as Ginny's cauldron went flying

Existential	Existent	Circ.
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[XIX/116]        There            was            a thin mist ...

Existential	Existent
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[XX/127]        There            are            some wizards    like Malfoy's Family ...

Existential	Existent	Circ.
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[III/22]            There            is            a plot, ...

Existential	Existent
-------------	----------

[XVIII/96]      There            was            a slight stiffness    in the way

Existential	Existent	Circ.
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Not all of those existents show things. Found in datum [XX/127], the existent *some wizards* does not construe thing but it shows person (wizard). Person thus is included in entity; therefore, it is placed in this section (existent of entity). Furthermore, besides parts functioning as existential process and existent, it is found that some parts of clauses functioning as circumstances. For instance; datum [I/7] occupies a circumstance *in the frying pan*. This circumstance informs the position/place where the existent is. In this case, it is called as circumstance of place. There are other circumstances of place found; they are *in the middle* [VI/41], *on the front of a very good-looking wizard* [VII/43], *in the law* [XI/46-47], *inside* [XIII/66], and *in the way* [XVIII/96]. On the other hand, circumstances are also found from data [XIV/71] and [XX/127], but both do not posit a position or place but they refer to different point. Circumstance *as Ginny's cauldron went flying* taken from datum [XIV/71] modifies when *the thus of metal* existed. It means that it refers to temporal information. It is thus called as circumstance of time. Furthermore, another circumstance *like Malfoy's family* found from datum [XX/127] shows a different condition. It refers to the comparison construing the similarity of what someone behaves. Halliday (2014) calls it as circumstance of manner (comparison).

From those circumstances, it can be characterized that each circumstance is preceded by prepositions (in, on, and inside) then they direct to position or place. Another characteristic found as well is that the words *as* and *like* can contextually figure out circumstance.

### Existent of Event

Presented with the unusual space and boxes as well, the following clauses carry out existents construing event, moment, and action. For instance; data [II/22] and [XVII/90], the existents show a moment with which no noise or sound at all. Another existent carries out action as found in datum [IV/26], it is *scream*. Even though it has an action, it does not mean that it shows another type of process. It is in the form of noun which presents thing. There is another thing proving so, it can be seen from the existential process *were* in the clause. This process construes existence and in this case the word *screams* is an existent.

Further, it is noted as well that other existents found are the effect of action, in another word it is sound. For instance; datum [V/33] has *a small click* as its existent which refers to a sound produced by process of clicking. Other existents such as *a violent scuffling noise*, *a popping noise*, *a knock and snap* refer to sound produced by process of scuffling, popping, knocking, and snapping. It means that the existents appear because of action (in this case called process). There is an existent found from datum [XV/79] which is involved in existent of entity i.e. *the car*. It is placed here because it is a part of the clause under the discussion of this section.

[II/22]	There	was	a silence ...
		Existential	Existent
[IV/26]	There	were	screams from the dining room ...
		Existential	Existent Circ.
[V/33]	There	was	a small click
		Existential	Existent
[IX/44]	There	was	a violent scuffling noise
		Existential	Existent
[XV/79]	Then there	was	a popping noise and the car
		Existential	Existent
[XVI/90]	There	was	a knock on the office door and snap
		Existential	Existent Circ. Existent
[XVII/90]	There	was	a long silence
		Existential	Existent

Another point which is discussed as well in this section is circumstance. It is found in datum [IV/26] and it is preceded by a preposition i.e. from (from the dining room). As found in the previous section, this circumstance construes a place where something is taken from. Therefore, it is labeled as circumstance of place. Another circumstance is found as well in datum [XVI/90], it is *on the office door*. In this circumstance, a preposition precedes *the office door* and construes where a sound of knocking is heard; thus it is also called as circumstance of place.

### Conclusion

It is reported that there are twenty clauses found which have existential process. From those twenty clauses, there are thirteen existential clauses which have existents of entity and there are other seven clauses which have existents of event. It can be reported as well that even though the form of a particular existent is not a noun (thing), contextually it can function as existent as found in the analysis of datum [1/7]. The word found is *more*. Those existential clauses employ auxiliary verb (to be; was and were) as the existential process and dummy subject (there). In this case, this dummy subject just functions as the subject but has no influential meaning to the clause. It is merely to fulfill the requirement of constructing clause in English. Finding existential process and existent, this research found circumstance from ten clauses. It is noted that eight of them are characterized based on preposition (in, on and inside) which construe position or where something exists or is heard. In another words it is called as circumstance of place. Another circumstance is preceded with a word (as), it shows when something happened; therefore it is included in circumstance of time. Moreover, there is also another circumstance showing the comparison of behavior. There are two words (as and like) found show

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### Appendices

- [1] "There's more in the frying pan, sweetums," said Aunt Petunia, turning misty eyes on her massive son. (1998: 7)
- [2] There was a silence broken only by the chink of knives and forks from downstairs and the distance rumble of Uncle Vernon's voice. (1998: 22)
- [3] "There is a plot, Harry Potter." (1998: 22)
- [4] There were screams from the dining room and Uncle Vernon burst into the kitchen to find Harry, rigid with shock, covered from head to foot in Aunt Petunia's pudding. (1998: 26)
- [5] There was a small click and the door swung open. (1998: 33)
- [6] There was a scrubbed wooden table and chairs in the middle and Harry sat down on the edge of his seat, looking around. (1998: 41)
- [7] There was a big photograph on the front of a very good-looking wizard with wavy blond hair and bright blue eyes. (1998: 43)
- [8] There were plenty of weeds, and the grass needed cutting. (1998: 43-44)
- [9] There was a violent scuffling noise, the peony bush shuddered and Ron straightened up. (1998: 44)
- [10] "There was some pretty nasty stuff that wasn't my department, though." (1998: 46)
- [11] "There's a loophole in the law, you'll find as long as he wasn't intending to fly the car, the fact that the car could fly wouldn't -." (1998: 46-47)
- [12] There was also a list of new books he'd need for the coming year. (1998: 51)
- [13] There was a very small pile of silver Sickles inside, and just one gold Galleon. (1998: 66)
- [14] There was a thud of metal as Ginny's cauldron went flying. (1998: 71)
- [15] Then there was a popping noise and the car, Harry and Ron reappeared. (1998: 79)
- [16] There was a knock on the office door and Snape, now looking happier than ever, opened it. (1998: 90)
- [17] There was a long silence. (1998: 90)
- [18] There was a slight stiffness in the way she said "Morning" which told Harry that she was still disapproving of the way they had arrived. (1998: 96)
- [19] There was a thin mist hanging across the pink and gold sky. (1998: 116)
- [20] "There are some wizards – like Malfoy's Family – who think they're better than everyone else because they're what people call pure-blood." (1998: 127)