

# The Process Types in the Reading Passages of Iraqi EFL 4<sup>th</sup> Preparatory Textbooks

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**Submission date:** 13/1 /2025

**Acceptance date:** 16 / 2/2025

**Publication date:** 26/ 2/2025

## Abstract

This study depicts the transitivity system used in reading passages for the 4<sup>th</sup> preparatory student's textbook in English for Iraq (garnet series). This study aims at 1: Identifying the most prevalent process types used in the reading passages of English textbooks for Iraqi secondary school students and 2: Determining the implications of the most dominant process type. This study is conducted by using qualitative and quantitative analyses. In most cases, material processes are used. It is, therefore, appropriate to note that several passages in English textbooks for secondary schools include actions or describe events that take place physically. Accordingly, the process used in reading passages signified action, action taken, or what is done.

**Key words:** systemic functional linguistics, ideational metafunction, transitivity system, types of processes, reading passages, secondary school.

## أنواع العمليات في قطع القراءة في منهج الرابع اعدادي لمادة اللغة الإبلخيزية في

### العراق

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## المستخلص

تتبع الدراسة نظام التناقلية الموجود في قطع القراءة في منهج الرابع اعدادي لمادة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية في العراق. تهدف الدراسة الى: 1-تشخيص العمليات الأكثر استخداما في تلك القطع و 2-تحديد تأثير العمليات الأكثر استخداما لتوضيح فكرة القطع. اعتمدت الدراسة تحليلا نوعيا وكميا. اغلب قطع القراءة تتضمن العمليات المادية وذلك نتيجة لتضمن تلك القطع المخصصة لصف الرابع اعدادي بالتعليم الثانوي على احداث وفعاليات حركية ووصفية. وعليه فأن هذه العمليات تشير الى الفعل او ما يحدث او ما حدث.

**الكلمات الدالة:** اللغويات الوظيفية النظامية، الوظيفة الفوقية الفكرية، نظام الانتقالية، أنواع العمليات، مقاطع القراءة، المدرسة الثانوية.

## 1.Introduction

For effective communication in English, reading is an essential skill as it facilitates comprehension and interpretation of written texts, which are integral to many forms of communication. In Iraq, the English reading skill ability is usually considered important [1:p.3]. In reading texts, students have the ability to comprehend the meaning of the text, as well as to analyze the social function, generic structure, and linguistic features that are present in the text [2]. Education in Iraq gives a great interest in English, therefore; it is included in the curriculum of all the educational levels. Internationally, English language is a global language in the world related to communication with people around the world. Apart from listening, speaking, and writing, reading is essential to learning a foreign language. Upon comprehension of the reading text, students are expected to have the ability to explain each passage or word.

A good book can be classified into a number of categories. A textbook should first deal with the current curriculum; it may be from a genre that should be included in the text [3]. Observing the School-Based Curriculum, the need for comprehension of reading materials can be summed up as being able to grasp the meaning and the steps of the rhetorical development in the written material (narrative, descriptive, recount, procedure, report, etc.). It is generally regarded that reading is a solitary activity in which the reader engages in a personal interaction with the text [3].

The clauses of the reading passages include transitivity system. Furthermore, when they are related to communication, processes provide timing information of their happening. In order to teach students effectively, teachers must understand the reading process and lead their attention to what is indicated in the passage. A systemic functional linguistic perspective holds that language is used as a means of expressing the message of a clause. Halliday and Matthiessen [4,p.213] state that the experience's ingredients consist of a "flow of events, going –on" reflected by the clause grammar in a "quantum of change in its grammar". The experiential metafunction reflects people's use of language to represent the world [5]. Precisely, the clause is a means of reflecting people's inner and outer experience [4]. Ebrahimi et al. [6.p.2558] confirm the previous idea by considering experiential metafunction as a resource which makes us construe the surrounding experience. Thus, language serves as a means for representing the world since it encodes our experiences and plays an important role in our interaction with others [7]. For Cunanon [8,p.72], ideational serves expressing the content or the speaker's experience of the real world. This metafunction permits to encode people's view of the physical and imaginary world [9]. Halliday and Matthiessen [4,p.214] consider the outer experience as a representation of actions and events whereas the inner experience is a "replay of the outer, recording it, reacting to it, reflecting on it, and partly a separate awareness of our states of being". Each quantum of change is "modelled" as a "figure" of: happening, doing, sensing, being, or having. The grammatical system that realizes the ideational metafunction is the transitivity system. Within the transitivity system, the study tackles only types of the processes since each process is the central core and each constitutes a different face of a specific experience. This research is a try to answer the following inquiries:

1- What are the types of processes that realize the transitivity system in the reading passages?

2- What are the implications of the most dominant process type ?

The present study aims at:

1: Identifying the types of processes that realize the transitivity system in the reading passages .

2: Determining the implications of the most dominant process type.

The study examines all the reading passages, which are 12, found in 4<sup>th</sup> preparatory student's textbook. The data includes (524) clauses.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 General background

This study is intended to improve the understanding of EFL learners regarding the application of ideational meaning in transitivity systems. The teacher may find it helpful to know the aspects of transitivity in the reading passages of the textbook and it can serve as a tool to let the students know about functional grammar so that students are able to translate their knowledge into writing or reading. Many research papers dealt with transitivity system. To mention some, Anggun [10] held a research about transitivity system in genre analysis on English on Sky textbook and found that material process is dominating. Arifiani [3] made a study about the transitivity system in reading passage of English textbook for junior high school and came up with a conclusion that the material processes are the dominant. Babai and Ansary [11] conducted a research about transitivity system in three textbooks (Physics, Sociology, and Literature) and found that the material process is dominant. A study has done by Panjaitan [12] who analyzed five texts in Senior High School textbook, randomly selected; found that the most dominant type of process used in those texts is relational process. For the best of the researcher's knowledge, no previous study examined the process types in the selected data.

### 2.2 Transirivity system

Briones [5] refers to the process of forming the texts as transitivity, which is the key grammatical system for analyzing the experiential metafunction. Semantically, transitivity pertains to how meaning is expressed in a clause. Ryder [14, p. 40] surveys transitivity in a Hallidayan sense since the process of creating experiential or ideational meaning through language refers to the way that entities and actions in a situation are encoded in the language. When transitivity is present in a clause, it makes it easier for the reader to comprehend the specific process described [15, p.24]. An encoding and decoding process using lexicogrammar is what this system is all about [16]; and [17]. As far as transitivity is concerned, it is related to the verb in the clause, i.e. whether or not it is sufficient with the subject or exceeds an object or objects. In Halliday's terms, transitivity is "a property of clauses rather than verbs" [17, p.13]. With the ideational metafunction, language construes human experience. As well as providing a theory of human experience, it provides certain resources of each language's lexicogrammar [4, p. 30]. In this sense, the clause represents a process that is taking place: doing or occurring, saying or sensing, being or having with various participants and circumstances.

Nevertheless, the clause is not merely a figure, but also a way of enacting our interpersonal relationships with others around us [18]. All of the processes enjoy equal value i.e. no priority of a process over the other [4]. Thompson [20] proceeds claiming that a clause's core is its process, i.e., the clause's perspective on the action, event, or state of the participants. Lexicographically, the process is realized by a verb group [19,p.1207].

### 2.3 Types of Processes

Transitivity provides a means of clarifying verbs and clauses by illustrating the relationship between the verb and other clause components [13,p.79]. Accordingly, it is considered that the process is the key element on which other elements of the clause are based [5,p.111]. Each component in each clause differs according to the type of the process.

Six types of processes presenting human experience. The major are the material, mental, and relational while the minor are behavioral, verbal and existential [17,p.13].

#### 2.3.1 . Material Process

Semantically, it is defined as the clause that describes doing, whether concrete or abstract i.e. a certain entity undertakes or performs some action [21, p. 215]. Accordingly, there are two variables of this process: doing to, dispositive type and bringing about or creative type [6]. As a process of “doing and happenings”, This comprises actions, activities, events, configurations of a process, and participants involved in the process, which require some energy to occur, as well as the possibility that one of the participants will undergo a change as a result of the process [24]; [4].As in:

- 1- Limestone *conforms* in many ways.
- 2- She *Painted* the house.
- 3- He should *turn* her out.
- 4- He shouldn't *send* her back.
- 5- She *crossed* the mountain.
- 6- He *built* Mary a house. [4, p. 230-2]

#### 2.3.2. Mental Process

While the material process represents the external experience, the internal experience and consciousness are represented through the mental process. The mental process is a “sensing based process” [22,p.38]. Consciousness is identified with the process of sensing , seeing ,feeling, or thinking [8,p.74].With mental clauses, the question is not about actions or doing in a tangible , physical sense but about thought ,feelings, and perceptions [27,p.206]. The mental clauses involve configuration of a process of consciousness with i.e. reflecting the inner world of the individual [19,p.1209]. Prototypically, Ryder [14] considers these processes as processes of state rather than actions.

Halliday and Matthiessen confirm that the main concern of the mental process is to reflect people's inner experience or consciousness. Semantically, the process is “either construed as flowing from a person's consciousness or as “impringing on” it, but it is not construed as a mental act” [4, p. 245].

- 7- I *don't want* it. [7, p.117]
- 8- You *don't enjoy* your freedom now.[28, p.16]

- 9- He *couldn't see* anything. [ 22, p.38]  
 10- Mary *liked* the gift.[4, p.249]  
 11- She *remembered* the time she broke her leg.[25, p.18]

### 2.3.3 . Relational Process

Such a process expresses the world of abstract relations that exist between two participants associated with the process [6]. Thompson [20] agrees with that by claiming that the relation is between two concepts related or linked by the process signaling the existence of the relationship. Relational processes serve to construe people's outer and inner experience as being rather than doing, happening or sensing [4].

In a semantic sense, "experiential weight" refers to a sharing of experiences between two participants, while the process is merely a means of bringing them to gether .The verbs that are found in this process is *be* and *have* [4]. Relational process is found in two modes: class membership (classifying or describing) or identifying .The former is realized by the attributive clause and the latter by the identifying clauses, as:

- 12- That dog *seems* worried. (**Attributive**)  
 13- The woman *is* a professor. (**Identifying**)[14,p.41]  
 15- Here *are* some suggestions for publishing your work. (**Attributive**)  
 16- Revising *is* the first step in the editing process. (**Identifying**)[25,p.18]  
 17- This bread *is* stale. (**Attributive**)  
 18- She *was* an art student. (**Identifying**)[20,p.102]  
 19- Hasan *is* wise. (**Attributive**)  
 20- Hasan *is* the leader. (**Identifying**) [26,p.25]

In the Attributive mode, the first participant is classified as a member of a class (a is an attribute of x), whereas the identifying, the second participant gives an identity among others to the first i.e. identifying one entity in terms of another (a is an identity of x) [4, p. 286]; [15,p.26]; and [20,p.102].

### 2.3.4. Behavioural Process

The manifestations of the inner workings and the acting of the process of consciousness are represented by the behavioural processes [24] . Eggins [21] illustrates this by saying that they are “intermediate between the mental and the material processes. However, they have their own grammatical features” . Halliday and Matthiessen [4, p. 30]observe that these processes have the ability to reflect the “physiological and psychological behaviours”. They resemble breathing, coughing, smiling, dreaming, and stating:

- 21- He's *dreaming*.  
 22- Why do you *laugh*?[4, p.301]  
 23- I *could cry* salty tears.  
 24- She *smiled*. [7, p.126]

### 2.3.5. Verbal Process

It is located at the boundary between the mental and the relational process.

It is a process of verbalization of thought as a kind of inner speech [7];[4]. It resembles “processes of saying, of symbolically signaling” [23,p.57].[19,p.1211] confirm this by indicating that the verbal processes are “symbolic relations constructed in human

consciousness and enacted in the form of language". They are processes of saying as well as showing or indicating something. Since they involve symbolically encoded information to be transferred between individuals, they play an essential role on different types of discourse. They also contribute remarkably to narrative creation by enabling dialogic passages to be established [4];[14];and [ 25].

25- The committee **announced** that the new bill be passed.[6,p.2560]

26- I **asked** him a question.[21,p.235]

27- Notice **tells** you to keep quiet.

28- My watch **says** it's half past ten. [4,p.303]

29- Ali **praised** Ahmed to other students in the class.[13,p.80]

### 2.3.6. Existential Process

It is at the boundary between the relational and the material process[4]. Semantically, it represents the existence or happening of something. The subject "there" is not treated as a participant or a circumstance with a representational meaning but it only serves to sign a feature of existence, as in:

30- There's your father on the line.[4,p.309]

"The entity or the extent that is being said to exist" is the **existent** that can be a thing, an event, a person, an entity, etc.:

31- There **was** a storm.

32- There was an old man.

**Existent: person**

33- On the wall **hangs** a picture.

**Existent: entity** [4,p.309]

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. The sample

All the reading passages of the 4<sup>th</sup> preparatory student's textbooks ( English for Iraq/Garnet series) are selected. This textbook is considered a transition point since it is the first curriculum after finishing the intermediate stage in learning. All the reading passages include (524) clauses. All are analyzed thoroughly to check the types of processes.

### 3.2 The Tools for Analysis

The types of processes that are considered the core of the transitivity system and best represented by Halliday and Matthessien [4]. These types of processes are found at the clause level.

### 3.3 Method of Analysis

As a research design, a descriptive and referential analysis is utilized. The source of the data is from the clauses contained in the reading passages. In this paper, there were some points to be done. Data identification was the first step. Following the segmentation of texts into clauses and the collection of data, Halliday and Matthessien's framework was used to identify the types of processes within the clauses. As soon as the data had been identified, it was categorized in the data sheets according to the types of processes

that had been carried out. To determine which process types characterized the reading passages, the researcher calculated the data in the table of percentages. Finally, some conclusions are drawn to give a brief explanation about the results.

#### 4. The results

The results show that the data contain 524 clauses; all of them include processes of different types. The six types are spread in the data but with different rates. What sheds the heed is the gradual employment of clauses and the types of processes from 24 up to 73. The material processes are the highest, (226, 43.13 %) occurrences, whereas the verbal processes are the lowest with (15, 2.86 %) occurrences only. The second highest is the relational with (162, 30.92 %) occurrences. The picture is a little bit different when dealing with each reading passage aside. The UNICEF passage shows the relational to be the highest (14, 58.33 %) and the second is the behavioural (4, 16.66 %) occurrences. Official Languages and The FIFA World Cup passage show equal employment for the material and the relational processes, (10, 41.66 %) for each in the former and (13, 23.21 %) for each in the latter. The following table clarify them:

(Table 1) Process Types in the Data

N o.	Title of the Passage	Process Types												Total
		ME T	%	ME NT	%	RE L	%	BE V	%	VER B	%	EX T	%	
1	Official Languages	10	41.66	1	4.16	10	41.66	0	0	0	0	3	12.5	24
2	UNICEF	1	4.16	2	8.33	14	58.33	4	16.66	0	0	3	12.5	24
3	Places to go	22	56.41	3	7.69	12	30.76	0	0	0	0	2	5.12	39
4	The gap year	23	53.48	3	6.97	12	27.91	3	6.97	0	0	2	4.65	43
5	Wedding Customs	28	59.57	2	4.25	16	34.04	0	0	0	0	1	2.12	47
6	School Trip	12	35.29	3	8.82	14	41.18	5	14.71	0	0	0	0	34
7	Have a good night	15	27.78	9	16.66	10	18.52	12	22.22	7	12.96	1	1.85	54
8	The FIFA World Cup	13	23.21	11	19.64	13	23.21	11	19.64	6	12.5	1	1.79	56
9	Science today	20	45.45	2	4.54	17	38.64	0	0	1	2.27	4	9.09	44
10	Restoring The Garden of Eden	31	58.49	5	9.43	12	22.64	2	3.77	0	0	3	5.66	53
11	Online Shopping	15	45.45	3	9.09	11	33.33	0	0	0	0	4	12.12	33
12	Keeping fit in space	36	49.32	10	13.70	21	28.77	1	1.37	0	0	5	6.85	73
<b>Total</b>		226	43.13	54	10.31	162	30.92	38	7.25	15	2.86	29	5.53	524

Material processes seem to be the highest except in four passages; these are the Official Languages, UNICIF, School Trip, and the FIFA world Cup. In passages as Places to go, The gap year, Wedding Customs, Have a good night, SCIENCE TODAY, Restoring the Garden Eden, Online Shopping, and Keeping fit in space, the focus is on processes as travel, spending time for travel, spending time to enjoy, what to do to have a good night, how to do shopping, etc. To mention some, in places to go passage, as *“It is made of thousands of stones, the stones took the steps but we weren’t allowed, we had been walking all day”*, in the gap year, in *“more and more people are choosing to work with charity organizations, others use time to see the world, find an organization that can teach you, and help you get the right safety gear, the number of organizations that organize gap years is growing year by year, in Wedding Customs in “in the past, wedding in many countries took place over several days, some people even get married in group ceremonies”*, in Have a good night in *“they could drink a glass of warm milk”*, ... and finally in the last passage in *“when we don’t experience gravity, we don’t need to use of the muscles we use every day on Earth just to stand up and walk”*, ... The relational processes appear as the second highest and the highest in comparison with the other passages in Keeping fit in space, SCIENCE TODAY, and Wedding Customs. In Wedding Customs, they are used to classify and identify the wedding types in *“weddings are different from country to country. They are also different from what they were in the past, etc.”* In SCIENCE TODAY, the relational processes are to describe attributively, in *“sometimes the wind is gentle, sometimes it is so strong, the air is warm, etc.”* In keeping fit in space, the relational processes are to identify the guest in *“our guest on today’s programme is an astronaut, to describe circumstantial relation in “we’re in space, we’re on Earth, another problem is with our bones”*. In addition, to classify in *“our bones can get weaker through lack of exercise, it is dark, and it is light. Days and nights are not the same as on Earth, etc.”* The third is the mental processes with (54, 10.31%) occurrences. The highest is found in The FIFA world Cup, (11, 19.64%) and keeping fit in space with (10, 13.70%) occurrences. In The FIFA World Cup, for instance, mental processes are to express recognition, in *“you should think about it, I also suggest”*, sensation in *“I don’t feel like exercising”*, desirable in *“If you want to be fit and healthy, you need to take regular exercise, I want to talk, I want to avoid injuries, many people want to do too much”*, and perception in *“you will often hear people say that exercise should be painful, etc.”* With the last passage, mental processes are employed to express desires in *“we don’t need to be strong in space, we need to stay healthy, we don’t need to use many of muscles, we need to eat foods, etc.”* Behavioural processes are the highest in Have a good night sleep, with (12, 22.22%) occurrences, in *“many teenagers sleep for only six or seven hours at night, but they should sleep for an average of eight hours per night, the first stage is when you fall asleep, during this time, you wake up very easily, in the third and fourth stages you sleep more deeply, the last stage is the time when you dream, etc.”* Verbal processes are highly found in Have a night sleep, (7) times, because it is an interview with an expert. Examples, as *“we asked Dr. Ibrahim Ansari, a sleep expert, Dr. Ansari said he was worried, Dr. Ansari told us that many of the teenagers he saw got bad marks, we asked Dr. Ansari what these stages of sleep were, we asked Dr. Ansari what teenagers with sleep problems could do, Dr. Ansari told us they could drink a glass of*

warm milk, and he *said* many teenagers found drinking milk relaxing”. Finally, the highest existential processes are found in the last passage, with (5) times, (3) in “*there is no gravity*” to emphasize the idea of no gravity in space and in “*is there anything you can do*” and “*there’s no place to walk or run*”.

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the results, there are some points that have been studied in this paper. First, the transitivity system is realized through the six types of processes, the material, mental, relational, behavioural, verbal, and existential processes. Second, the most dominant processes is the material process while the second is the relational with the verbal being the lowest. The achievement of aims is shown by the qualitative analysis and supported by the descriptive quantitative analysis in (table 1). Some conclusions can be drawn:

1. Halliday and Mathiessen (2014) study proves itself as a suitable model to analyze the experiential metafunction through the transitivity system.
2. There is a gradual employment of clauses from the lowest until the highest indicating that this syllabus is designed to improve the reading ability from the easiest to a more complicated passage.
3. All the six types of processes realize the transitivity system in all the reading passages in the secondary school, 4<sup>th</sup> preparatory student’s book in English for Iraq series.
4. The most dominant types of process is the material process. This is because most of the passages contain actions and happenings reflected with the aid of the material processes within narrative texts.
5. The second dominant is that of the relational processes in the whole data. However, in two passages, they equal the material processes and in the second passage, the relational is the highest. This indicates the importance of the relation between the elements of the clause linked by the relational process either to classify attributively or to identify.
6. The mental processes occupy the third dominant type of processes. They are to reflect the inner world of the experience, i.e. what happened or reacted in our consciousness. Such processes are found in the passages especially when the students are asked to think, to draw some conclusions, and answer the questions about the passages. Within the reading passages, the mental processes are used to express recognition, perception, and desires but not emotions. The highest employment is found in the eighth reading passage.
7. The behavioural processes are employed when the processes are dangling between the material and mental processes indicating semi physical or semi mental actions, as with the description of the sleeping habits described in the seventh reading passage.
8. Because of the narrative nature of the reading passages, there is an employment of the existential processes. They are used when there is narration for some events. This process is used to represent something exists by identifying it usually with the word “there”.
9. The lowest is the verbal process. They are used heavily in only two reading passages, the seventh and the eighth. They are to transform information and exchange ideas

between participants, therefore those two reading passages include interviews with experts.

### CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There are no conflicts of interest

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