

ANALYSIS OF A LITERARY WORK USING SYSTEMIC-FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR*

Bárbara Cristina GALLARDO
(Universidade Federal do Acre - UFAC)

ABSTRACT: *The objective of this study is to examine the language used by the main male and female characters in the play 'Pygmalion' (Bernard Shaw, 1913) by applying the lexicogrammatical category of transitivity, which is part of English linguist M.A.K. Halliday's (1985; 1994) systemic-functional grammar. The investigation is based on the idea suggested by Cameron (1995) that the play, which has been considered one about social class may also be classified as one about gender. The results show that the male's characteristics portray men concerned with rational matters, while the female character represents women as being more concerned with the emotional side in their relationships.*

KEY-WORDS: *language, systemic-functional grammar, transitivity, gender.*

RESUMO: *O objetivo deste estudo é examinar a linguagem usada pelas personagens principais masculina e feminina da peça 'Pygmalion' (Bernard Shaw, 1913), aplicando os conceitos do lingüista inglês M.A.K. Halliday (1985; 1994) da transitividade, que faz parte da gramática sistêmico-funcional. A investigação é baseada na idéia sugerida por Cameron (1995) de que a peça pode ser classificada como uma obra de gênero, além de classe social. Os resultados mostram que as características da personagem masculina retratam os homens preocupados com problemas de ordem racional, enquanto a personagem feminina representa as mulheres como sendo mais emocionais em suas relações.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *linguagem, gramática sistêmico-funcional, transitividade, gênero.*

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1. Introduction

The idea that a literary text written almost a hundred years ago may be linked to present-day reality seems to be both fascinating and scaring. Fascinating because when reading a literary text we get involved with the characters, sometimes identify ourselves with their thoughts and actions, and wonder what we would do if it happened to us in real life. On the other hand, it is scaring to think that negative aspects of it are happening in our society, and we are not doing anything about it other than accepting the rules or pretending it is not of our business.

The purpose of this study is to investigate gender features in the famous play *Pygmalion* (first published in 1916), written by the Irish writer Bernard Shaw, using the systemic-functional grammar. The suggestion that the play cannot be only considered about social class, but also about gender, was introduced by the linguist Deborah Cameron, in her book *Verbal Hygiene* (1995).

The lexicogrammatical category of transitivity, which is part of English linguist M.A.K. Halliday's systemic-functional grammar (1985;1994), enables the analysis of the experiential function of people's perception of the world through the way they use language. As Halliday puts it, 'language enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of what goes on around them and inside them' (1994: 106).

The analysis of the lexicogrammatical choices made by the two main characters in the play *Pygmalion* (Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins) intends to relate the language used by them to represent their world and what these representations convey concerning gender. The relevance of this study lies in the fact that, if gender-related issues are not pointed out and established as a characteristic of its text, readers may assume that the characters' attitudes considering their gender represent a naturalized commonsensical view regarding male and female behavior.

The main argument of the transitivity system is that the experiences we go through life consists of 'goings-on' – happening, doing, sensing, meaning, being and becoming' (1994:106), which are shared by people through clauses that constitute language they use to communicate. According to the way people view the world (due to experiences they go through), they will express themselves in particular ways, which in the transitivity system are called processes.

According to the transitivity system, the verbs can be classified in six processes: material, verbal, relational, behavioral and existential. The most important ones which are analyzed in the excerpts taken from the play *Pygmalion* for the analysis of gender are the material, the mental and the relational processes.

The investigation suggests that the material processes the male character uses have effect over the female and also show how his goal-minded and professional oriented soul are realized through his doings portraying him as a powerful character typically associated with the public domain. The analysis of the mental processes, which is the process most used by the female character highlights her emotional-oriented being, which is more concerned with feelings, affection and intimacy than with rational matters, although she wants to succeed in life. The relational processes help to deconstruct the view both characters have of themselves in relation to the situation they face, and how odd it is for them to realize each other's view of the world.

2. Summary of the Play

The play *Pygmalion* tells a story of a poor flower-girl, Eliza Doolittle, who speaks the Cockney dialect, and a bachelor phonetician called Henry Higgins, who preaches perfect English as a sign of nobility. After overhearing a conversation between Higgins and his friend Colonel Pickering in the shelter of a church, Eliza thinks that she will never succeed in life because the way she speaks. She decides to go after Higgins and ask for lessons. He makes a bet with Pickering that in six months he would teach the flower girl how to talk 'correctly' and pass her off as a duchess at an ambassador's ball.

Eliza has lessons for six months, and acts and speaks perfectly at the ball. Afterwards, Higgins talks to Pickering about how happy he was for winning the bet. Eliza hears the conversation and feels terrible because she realizes that Higgins gets all the credits for her performance and also realizes that he does not care for her. She complains about his coldness, runs away and decides to marry Freddy, a poor man of status, who is in love with her and promises to protect her. Higgins makes fun of her marriage, since her future husband is one who could not do anything to her. Higgins asks Eliza to go back to his house and to continue to work there. Eliza gets angry and upset with his cold nature. The last act ends and her decision is not shown. In the sequel of the play, Shaw informs the readers that Eliza marries Freddy, but continues to be involved in the housekeeping at Higgins' house.

3. Systemic-Functional Grammar

To support the ‘naturalized’ idea presented in the play, that women are both powerless and dependent from men in Shaw’s *Pygmalion*, I based my analysis of the main characters’ speech in three important moments of the play, chosen to be considered turning points in the main characters’ life. The version of the book *Pygmalion* used for the analysis is the one printed in 1973, edited in Great Britain by Penguin Books.

Systemic-functional grammar (SFG) has been used by discourse analysts in the analysis of text’s structures. Some studies, for example, the ones carried at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) by Caldas-Coulthard (1997) and Heberle (1997) include the analysis of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), SFG and gender. SFG is called systemic because it is established that individuals have alternative choices available to produce linguistics utterances and texts. The system is what integrates the notion of choice in language, and the system network is the grammar, which offers a variety of options that, once chosen, involves other particular structured and lexical choices. It is called functional because the variety of purposes language is used for (Halliday, 1994). As Suzanne Eggins (1994) puts it, the function of language is to ‘make meanings; that these meanings are influenced by the social and cultural context in which they are exchanged; and that the processes of using language is a *semiotic* process, a process of making meanings by choosing’ (p. 2).

Halliday states that the context of a situation is arranged in three categories: field, tenor and mode. Analyzing these categories semantically, they correspond to the ideational, interpersonal and textual components. Clauses represent meaning through ideational, interpersonal and textual functions together. The ideational function allows users of language to present their world experience through lexicogrammatical choices they make, which are part of the transitivity system. The interpersonal function represents ‘the way listener and speaker interact’ (Halliday, 1994). It is through the interpersonal function that users of language establish, negotiate and assume their position in social relationships. These relational functions are identified through the analyzes of mood and modality patterns used by members of social interactions.

The textual function is concerned with the organizations and cohesion of situations. According to Fairclough (1992), it is Halliday’s textual function that enables a coherent linkage of parts of texts, taking

situations as given or presented as new, picking them out ‘as ‘topic’ or ‘theme’ (p. 65). Textual functions are identified through the analysis of thematic structures.

The transitivity system, which is the lexicogrammatical realization of the ideational function, is used to analyze interaction between the two characters in *Pygmalion*. The system allows an analysis of the meaning of clauses through the study of ‘choice of process types and participants roles seen as realizing interactants’ encoding of their experimental reality: the world of action, relation, participants and circumstances that give context to their talk’ (Eggins, 1994:220). The transitivity concepts applied in this study are linked to critical discourse analysis concepts, which together applied offer a visualization of gender traces presented in the play.

4. The Analysis

The transitivity system of language has been widely used nowadays to analyze the language of speakers and writers. It studies the structure of sentences, which is represented by processes (realized by types of verbs), the participants involved in these processes (which are part of the nominal group), and the circumstances in which they (participants and processes) are involved (realized by the adverbial and propositional phrase). It is part of the ideational function, represented in the clause, which, according to Downing and Locke, ‘permits us to encode, both semantically and syntactically, our mental picture of the physical world and the worlds of our imagination’ (1992:110).

The following analysis is mostly based mostly in three dialogues located in acts II, IV and V. The dialogues are mostly between Eliza and Higgins, but Mrs. Pearce (Higgins’ maid), Pickering and Mrs. Higgins (Higgins’ mother) also participate in Acts II and V.

The repeated occurrences of the most used processes were possible to be done through the concordancing program MicroConcord by Scott and Johns (1993). Their occurrences were checked and included in the analysis according to their contribution to portray reality representation for the two main characters concerning traces of gender.

4.1 Material Processes

The material process is the process of doing, where there is always an Actor (one who does something). Depending on the material process (if

it is extended to something or someone), the clause may also contain a Goal (one to whom the process is ‘directed at’), and/or a Beneficiary, that may be a Recipient (‘one that goods are given to’, 1994:145), or a Client (‘one that services are done for’, *ibid.*).

Focusing on the investigation of gender-related aspects, I first looked for Actors, Goals and Beneficiaries, and found that the male character Higgins identifies himself more as an Actor, i.e., the doer of something. Eliza, on the other hand, is identified more as a Goal or Beneficiary of his actions. For example, in the following clauses taken from the play,

Higgins: Why, this is the girl I jotted down last night. (p. 37)

Higgins: I’ll take her and pass her off as anything. (p. 41)

Higgins: I picked her off the kerbstone. (p. 71)

Higgins: I’ve taught her to speak properly. (p. 71)

Higgins is the Actor of the five material processes identified in the clauses, and Eliza is the Goal. Yet, the processes highlight his powerful position over the female. The next point observed, concerning the material process, is that Higgins’ actions are detached from feelings, and concerned with his work, status and profession most of the times, while Eliza’s actions are related to emotional affairs. For example, in the following utterances,

Higgins: I walk over everybody! (p. 41)

Higgins: ...Let’s put on our best Sunday manners for this creature that we picked out of the mud. (p. 124)

Higgins: I go my way and do my work without caring two-pence what happens to either of us. (p. 134)

Higgins: If you dare to set up your little dog’s tricks of fetching and carrying slippers against my creation of Duchess Eliza, I’ll slam the door in your silly face. (p. 134)

the material processes used by the male character identify him as a) a strict Actor (identified both by the material process ‘walk’ and ‘slam’, the Goals ‘everybody’ and ‘your silly face’); 2) a powerful (identified by material process ‘picked out’ and the Goal ‘this creature’), and 3) a professional one (identified by processes ‘go’ and ‘do’ and the Goals

‘my way’ and ‘my work’). On the other hand, the action taken by Eliza, for example, in the utterances,

Liza: [*snatching* up the slippers, and *hurling* them at him one after the other with all her force]: There are your slippers. ... (p. 104)

Liza: I'll *talk* as I like. You're not my teacher now. (p. 135)

Liza: I'll *marry* Freddy, I will, as soon as I am able to *support* him. (p. 137)

Liza: That's not a proper answer to give me [*she sinks* on the chair at the writing-table in tears]. (p. 136)

are moved by feelings of anger (in the examples above, realized by the material processes ‘snatch’, ‘hurl’, love ‘marry’, ‘support’, the verbal process ‘talk’) and of sadness (process: ‘sinks’, circumstance: ‘in tears’).

Another fact observed in the investigation of gender through the material process is that Eliza, as an Actor, utters that she is going to perform future actions, but many times she does not actually do what she says she will do. The following examples of the material process in which Eliza is the Actor, are uttered but not performed in the play:

Liza: ...And to *pay* for em t-oo:... (p. 37)

Liza: [*rising* and *squaring* herself determinedly]: I'm *going away*. He's off his chump, he is. I don't want no balmies teaching me. (p. 42)

Liza: I'll *teach* phonetics. (p. 137)

Liza: I'll *advertise* in the paper..., and that she'll *teach* anybody to be a duchess...for a thousand guineas. (p. 138)

This fact becomes significant for the analysis because it may portray the female character as an unreliable and unstable Actor. It may also be considered a synonym for intimidation. This characteristic is identified in the male's utterances, who is more information focused, a characteristic usually related to the public sphere. Through the analysis of the material process used by both characters it is possible to observe how active they are/are willing to be, in what circumstances, according to the way the world is represented to them.

4.1.1 Material Processes used by Henry Higgins

Through the concordancing program, it was possible to identify the material process ‘do’ and ‘make’ as the most used by the male character as well as the most used to refer to his actions in the dialogues studied. Their use as well as the use of other material process uttered by Higgins show the man acting in a public world, where power, domination, profession and status are the main focus.

- 1-*Higgins* [*heartily*] Why, because it was my job. [He *did* it because it was his job]. (p.134)
- 2-*Higgins*: I go my way and do my work without caring two-pence what happens to either of us. (p.134)
- 3-*Higgins* [*arrogant*] I can *do* without anybody. I have my own soul: my own spark of divine fire. (p. 133)
- 4-*Higgins*: By George, Eliza, the streets will be strewn down with the bodies of men shooting themselves for your sake before I've *done* with you. (p.42)
- 5-*Higgins*: Well, when I've *done* with her, we can throw her back into the gutter; and then it will be her own business again; so that's all right. (p.44)

For example, in utterances in which the process ‘do’ is present, and Higgins is the Actor, the process translates his confidence and professional-oriented mind (in utterance 1), independence (in 2), capacity (in 3), practical way of seeing things (in 4) as well as his domination over the female (in 5). The way the process ‘do’ is used to refer to Higgins’s actions by the ones who know m also translate his appetite for challenges, which is considered as part of men’s world of competition (in 6, for he promptly accepts the challenge) and power of persuasion (in 7), when it comes to professional matters:

- 6- *Pickering*: I’ll bet you all the expenses of the experiment you cant *do* it. And I’ll pay for the lessons. (p. 40)
- 7- *Mrs. Pearce*: [*uneasy*] Oh, don’t say that sir: theres more ways than one turning a girl’s head; and nobody can *do* it better than Higgins, though he may not always mean it. (p. 40)
- 8- *Mrs. Pearce*: ...I do hope, sir, you don’t encourage him to *do* any foolish. (p.40)

In 8, Mrs. Pearce knows Higgins is able to do anything in the name of his profession, and asks Pickering not to encourage Higgins (by betting he can not ‘do’ the experiment. The men do not listen to her, and go on with the planning of how Higgins will ‘act’, and what he will ‘make of her’.

Concerning the material process ‘make’, in the three dialogues analyzed, Higgins is the Actor of eight utterances where this process is used as it can be seen below. Through the use of the material process ‘make’ one can realize not only Higgins’ power of action as the analysis of process ‘do’ retreats, but also upon the transformation of Eliza:

- 9- *Higgins*: (...) I’ll shew you how I *make* records.
We’ll set her talking; (...) (p.35)
- 10- *Pickering*: I’ll say you are the greatest teacher
alive if you *make* that good. (p.40)
- 11- *Higgins*: This is my return for offering to take you
out of the gutter and dress you beautifully and
make a lady of you. (p. 43)
- 12- *Higgins*: I shall *make* a duchess of this
draggletailed guttersnipe. (p. 40)
- 13- *Higgins*: By George, Eliza, I said I’d *make* a
woman of you; and I have. (p. 138)
- 14- *Liza*: (...) Now you have *made* a woman of me
I’m not fir to sell anything else. (p. 107)
- 15- *Higgins*: (...) do you not understand that I *made*
you a consort for a king? (p. 137)
- 16- *Mrs. Higgins*: He *makes* remarks out loud all the
time on the clergyman’s pronunciation. (p. 139)

Higgins’ actions realized by the process ‘make’ are also related to the public domain, in which the process again shows Higgins’ involvement with challenges through a bet, i.e., an arrangement that involves money and professional status (Hornby, 1989) (utterances 10 and 12), professionalism (in 9), and professional accomplishments (in 13 and 15).

By calling Eliza a ‘draggletailed guttersnipe’ in utterance 12, Higgins emphasizes his abilities as an Actor because he makes it seem that he is going to perform a magic, i. e., to transform an animal into a human being. The noun *duchess* helps us to make it strong too because the animal will not be transformed into an ordinary human being, but into a duchess.

The material process 'teach' identifies Higgins as a professor. According to Coates (1995), 'the talk that takes place between professionals and clients...can be seen as a prototypical of the professional discourse' (p. 16). She claims that it is language used in the public domain, and that the encounters between professors and students are asymmetrical, and help to build and keep power relations. In the following examples, Higgins is the Actor of the material process 'teach' which highlights his powerful position:

- 17- *The flower girl*: He said he could *teach* me. (p.38)
- 18- *Higgins*: If I decide to *teach* you, I'll be worse than two fathers to you. (p.39)
- 19- *Liza*: What you *taught* me. (p.137)
- 20- *Liza*: I'll advertise in the papers that your duchess is only a flower girl that you *taught*, and that she'll teach anybody to be a duchess... (p.138)

The other most significant material process that demonstrates Higgins' powerful position over Eliza and his professional-oriented mind found in the three dialogues chosen are present in the following utterances:

- 21- *Higgins*: We must *help* her to prepare and fit herself for her new station of life. (p. 41)
- 22- *Higgins*: Well, when I've done with her, we can *throw* her back into the gutter: (p. 44)
- 23- *Higgins*: You won my bet! You! Presumptions insect! I *won* it. (p. 104)
- 24- *Higgins*: If these belonged to me...I'd *ram* them down your ungrateful throat. (p.108)
- 25- *Liza*: ...It's the one you *bought* me in Brighton. (p. 108)
- 26- *Higgins*: The question is not the whether I *treat* you rudely... (p. 132)
- 27- *Higgins*: Then *get out* of my way; for I won't *stop* for you. (p. 132)
- 28- *Higgins*: For the fun of it. That's why I *took* you on. (p. 134)
- 29- *Higgins*: I'll *adopt* you as my daughter and *settle* money on you if you like. (p. 135)

It may be observed that money, knowledge, confidence and competence are characteristics of Higgins's nature realized by the material process

above where he is the Actor of doings in which most of the times Eliza is the Goal.

4.2 Mental Processes

The mental process is represented by verbs related to feelings (liking, loving, hating), cognition (thinking, knowing, noticing) and perceiving (sing, hearing, tasting). The participants involved in this process are the Senser (the one who feels, thinks, perceives), and the Phenomenon (what is felt, thought, perceived). An example of the mental process in a clause is “I know what is right” (p. 39), where ‘I’ is the Senser, ‘know’ indicates the process, and ‘whats right’ is the Phenomenon, i.e., what is perceived.

Different from describing actions as the material process does, the mental process enables language users to express opinions, thoughts and tastes that help to identify their definitions of reality. It is also through the different way that people feel, think and perceive things that language users may be classified in a dominator/dominated division.

An analysis of the excessive use of mental processes by the female character helps us to show that she is very much concerned with her feelings and worries, while the male character’s use of mental processes refers to public and practical matters.

For example, in the following utterance in which Eliza (I) and Higgins (you) are the Sensers,

Liza: But I never *thought* of us making anything of one another,...; and you never *think* of anything else. (p. 135)

Through the mental process ‘think’, Eliza expresses that it is not part of her or Freddy’s world to ‘make’ anything of one another in a sense of acting. On the other hand, as she knows Higgins well, she is aware that the only way he ‘thinks’ and ‘understands’ a marital union is when a man acts on/for a woman (see underlined process below). It can be realized in the following excerpts:

(...)

Liza: Freddy's not a fool. And if he's young and poor and *wants* me, may he'd make me happier than my betters that bully me and don't want me. (p. 135)

Higgins: Can he make anything of you? That's the point.
(Pygmalion, 1973: 135)

(...)

Higgins: ...Woman: do you not *understand* that I made you consort for a king?

Liza: Freddy *loves* me: that makes him king enough for me. (...)

(ibid., 137)

The way Higgins and Eliza 'understand' the reality of marriage can be identified by the study of the processes above. Higgins 'understands' that Eliza should marry a king, i. e., a ruler, someone who would 'support' her with money and status, i.e., she would not have to worry as long as she performed her role of speaking 'properly'. Eliza, on the other hand, understands marriage as a synonym for love, caring and affection, even if it demands action (work and support the house).

Verbs can be classified in different process types according to their function in a context (Butt, Fahey, Spinks and Yallop, 1998). Therefore, while Higgins 'thinks' in the process 'make' as a material one, Eliza emphasizes the feelings he has for her.

A fact that may be realized by the mental process used by the characters is that Eliza does not show any sign of detachment from work at any time of the play (line 1 below), and that may be one of the reasons Higgins 'likes' her. He does not reject Eliza's 'wish' to work ("What about your idea of a florist's shop?" Act IV). What she demonstrates through mental processes, though, is that she wants to be cared for, recognized, loved, and liked for her efforts in a particular way (lines 4 and 5 below).

- 1- *Liza:* I *want* to be a lady in a flower shop... (p. 32)
- 2- *Liza:* Now: I'm not *fit* to sell anything else. I *wish*
- 3- you'd left me where you found me...(p.107)
- 4- *Liza:* I wont *care* for anybody that doesn't *care* for me.
(p. 133)
- 5- *Liza:* What did you do it for me if you didn't *like* me?
(p. 134)

The mental processes used by Higgins, however, demonstrate that he 'thinks' and 'cares' about 'sees' and 'notices' the world from a public perspective. The contrast between the male and the female characters realized through mental processes is that the female seeks for intimacy whereas the male seeks for distance and social progress as it identified through the Phenomenon underlined in the excerpt below:

Liza: ... And you don't *care* a bit for me.

Higgins: I *care* for life, for humanity ... What else can anyone ask?

(ibid., 1973: 133)

Another kind of evidence to suggest Higgins' detachments from intimacy and attachment to profession are found in the following utterances realized by the mental process 'think', 'care', 'know',

Mrs. Pearce: ...what do you *think* a gentleman like Mr. Higgins *cares* for what you came in? (p. 37)

Mrs. Pearce: ...Of course I *know* you don't mean any harm; but when you get what you call interested in people's accents, you never *think* or *care* what may happen to them or you. (p. 46)

Few occurrences of the mental process related to feelings (in comparison to the ones of cognition and perceiving), for example 'like' (2 occurrences), 'miss' (one occurrence) are found in the male character's utterances in the dialogues analyzed, which contrast significantly with the female discourse.

4.2.1 Mental Processes used by Eliza Doolittle

The mental process used by Eliza may support the hypothesis that her interests are private, emotional and passive. Her insistent claims for attention, admiration and acknowledgment are not shared by the male character who thinks the world in a different way from her. Wodak (1997) argues that the ideology constructed around the public and the private domains ignores the condition some women go through due to their status, race, economic and social condition, treating their issues as non-political.

Although Eliza is aware that she is passively used as an experiment, she expects Higgins to ‘care’ for her as a friend because of what she does for him (wins the bet). Eliza does not admit the fact that Higgins does not get involved in private matters:

Liza: You don’t *care*. I *know* you don’t *care*. You wouldn’t *care* if I was dead. ... (p. 104)

Liza: You never *thought* of the problem it would make for me. (p. 134)

The process ‘care’ and ‘think’ above show that Eliza wants to be treated differently from the other people; she wants Higgins to be kinder to her because of the time they spent together, her performance at the ball, her passivity and silence against his insults. Higgins, on the other hand, explains to her that he treats everybody the same way. Eliza gets irritated by listening to Higgins’ way of seeing things:

Liza: ...you don’t *care* for nothing but yourself. (p. 44)

Liza: ...I don’t *care* how you treat me. (p. 132)

The male character also gets irritated with the emotional affairs that surround Eliza’s world. While Higgins did the experiment to prove his professional capacity, Eliza says she did it for emotional reasons:

Liza: ... I did it because we were pleasant together and I come – came to *care* for you. ... (p. 136)

In spite of the fact that Eliza looks for improvement in order to higher her status and profession, ‘to feel loved’ seems to be a synonym for protection for her. If it were not, she could accept Higgins’ offer to adopt her, or his willingness to ask Mrs. Higgins to get a wealthy man of status to marry her. As Higgins states, Eliza is beautiful and speaks ‘properly’, i.e., she is prepared to be accepted by an upper level of society. She rejects the money and the easier life in trade of a man who loves her:

Liza: And he does *love* me. (p. 135)

Liza: Freddy *loves* me. (p. 137)

To be seen as someone special is a wish of Eliza that can be identified through her use of mental processes. Eliza does not say whether she loves Freddy or Higgins. Through the cold and practical way Higgins talks to her, she knows he does not like the way she wants.

While he does the experiment on her (before the ball party), she observes her professor, hoping that when it finishes she will be more than an experiment to him. As it does not happen, she expresses her disappointment:

Liza: I notice that you don't notice me. (p. 134)

In spite of showing action, as Higgins does, Eliza identifies herself more like a Senser. Following this view, both characters may be classified in different worlds, where in one the male is the Actor and the woman is the Goal; in the other, the woman is the Senser and the man is the Phenomenon. Eliza may be admitting in the utterance above that she does not act as much as Higgins, but she perceives things that he does not.

Eliza's utterances may be understood as a complaint: Higgins wants her to participate in his world, so she acts because of him (at the ball party). Eliza wants Higgins to do the same in her world, i.e., to notice her, but he does not. That is something that Eliza's nature cannot accept. She gets desperate to imagine that she has to live without being noticed and cared for. It may be said that Eliza feels betrayed by Higgins for his lack of cooperation. She rebels against herself for having been naïve to the point of thinking Higgins would care for or admire her. The mental processes 'know' and 'care' show that Eliza changes her point of view in relation to Higgins. By changing it, she becomes powerful and courageous enough to tell Higgins that now she is the one who does not care:

Liza: ... You think I must go back to Wimpole Street because I have nowhere else to go but father's. ... (p. 137)

Liza: ... What do I care? I knew you would strike me some day. ... Aha! Now I know how to deal with you. What a fool I was not to think of it before! Now I don't care that [snapping her fingers] for your bullying and

you big talk. ...Oh, when I *think* of myself crawling under your feet and being trampled on and called names, when I had only to lift up my finger to be as good as you, I could just kick myself. (pp. 137-138)

Her attitude impresses Higgins who recognizes her as a creation of his, a potential ‘woman’ able to perform meaningful actions for her lack of intimidation. This is a moment where it may be said that Higgins notices her:

Higgins: [wondering at her] You damned impudent slut, you! But it’s better than sniveling; better than fetching slippers and finding spectacles, isn’t it? [Rising] By George, Eliza, Eliza, I said I’d make a woman of you; and I have, I like you like this.

The solution that Eliza finds to run away from Higgins’ tyranny and her father’s impositions is realized through her marriage with a man of status but no money or professional gifts as previously stated. Although Eliza shows she can be as strong as Higgins, she does not compete with him because as it is realized through the mental processes highlighted here, it seems that her main aim is to be happy and loved.

4.3 Relational Processes

The relational process is the process of being, i.e., ‘something is being said to ‘be’ something else (1994: 119). In Halliday’s systemic-functional grammar, the relational process is divided in three subcategories: the intensive, for example in “*you are a fool*” (Pygmalion, 1973:136), the circumstantial, in “*she is at her writing-table...*” (ibid., 115), and the possessive, in “*...the girls has some feelings?*” (ibid., 43).

Each of the three subcategories of the relational process has an Attributive and an Identifying mode. In the Attributive mode, the participant involved is a Carrier of some quality attributed to it (an Attribute), for example, in “*I’m a good girl*” (ibid., 43), *good girl* is an Attribute of the Carrier *I*. In the Identifying mode, the participant

involved is the identified element that has an identity realized by an Identifier. For example, in the clause “*youre the greatest teacher alive...*” (ibid. 40), *the greatest teacher alive* is the Identifier of the Identified *you*.

The analysis below concentrates on the Attributive mode for being the most used by the characters to describe themselves in the play as well as the most evident concerning the objectives of this study. The study of the relational process start in the description of the characters located in Act II because the information provided in these excerpts carry Attributes given by the narrator, therefore it is supposed to be neutral and reliable and it will serve as basis for the readers to make a picture of the representation of both characters in their minds.

The analysis of the relational process done in the description of the characters in Act II show that the male is privileged by the Attributes given to him in a sense that he is described as an intelligent and confident man whose main interests concern his profession:

He *appears* in the morning light as a robust, vital, appetizing sort of man of forty or thereabouts, dressed in a professional looking black-frock-coat with a linen collar and a black silk tie. He *is* of the energetic, scientific type, heartily, even violently interested in everything that can *be* studied as a scientific subject, and careless about himself and other people, including their feelings. He *is*, in fact, but for his years and size, rather like a very impetuous baby ‘taking notice’ eagerly and loudly, and requiring almost as much watching to keep him out of unintended mischief. His manners varies from genial bullying when he *is* in good humor to stormy petulance when anything goes wrong; but he *is* so entirely frank and void of malice that he remains likeable even in his least reasonable moments.

(Pygmalion, 1973:33)

By contrast, despite the fact that the characters are from different social classes and present different characteristics concerning clothing and appearance, the relational processes used to describe the female character do not reveal any psychological characteristics or positive remarks other than her appearance:

She *is* not at all a romantic figure. She is perhaps eighteen, perhaps twenty, hardly older. She wears a little sailor hat of black straw that has long been exposed to the dust and soot of London and has seldom if ever been brushed. Her hair needs washing rather badly: its mousy color can hardly *be* natural ... Her boots *are* much of the worse for wear. She *is* no doubt as clean as she can afford to be, but compared to the ladies she *is* very dirty. Her features *are* not worse than theirs. But their condition leaves something to *be* desired; and she needs the services of a dentist.

(ibid.: 15)

(...)

She *has* hat with three ostrich feathers, orange, sky blue, and red. She *has* a nearly clean apron and the shoddy coat has been tidied a little. The pathos of this deplorable figure, with its innocent vanity and consequential air, touches Pickering...

(ibid.: 36)

As it can be noticed, the male's characteristics highlight the way he is, while the female's ones pinpoint the way she looks. Some possessive attributive clauses used to describe Eliza demonstrate the negative aspects of what she has (dirty boots, nearly clean apron and her poor condition). On the other hand, there are no attributive possessive clauses in Higgins' description. While the man is described as a 'professional type', the female is represented as 'not a romantic figure' as if it these two Attributes were conditions expected from a man and a woman. The negative particle 'not' in Eliza's representation in contrast with Higgins 'professional looking' may be understood as the male representing his role (professional) and the female failing to provide hers (romantic).

The negative attributes used to describe Higgins' nature, for example, his bad humor and petulance are excused by the fact that he is a 'baby type figure', which makes him likeable even when he is insulting people as it is stated. It may be said that even the noun 'bullying' loses its negative connotation by the antecedent Attribute 'genial'. The contrast between his lack of feelings and interest in scientific studies seems to be relevant in order to understand his nature once they are pointed out in its description. On the other hand, the female's characteristics are left to be imagined from what it is said about her appearance.

Looking at the attributes Eliza ascribes to herself in three moments of the play, it may be argued that she changes them, i.e., she changes her way of seeing herself after realizing that Higgins' intentions are not the same as hers when the bet is over. On the other hand, it seems that Higgins keeps the Attributes he gives to himself from beginning to end.

The transformation of Eliza goes through seems to question her beliefs concerning what people expect her to be, how people see her, and what she is. The question 'should I show what I am, or should I pretend I am the Eliza they want me to be?' seems to be present in Eliza's actions until she realizes she will have to give up her happiness because of Higgins' sense of what life should be.

Although both characters agree that Eliza is the Carrier of the Attribute 'fool' before arguing with Higgins, and is 'as good as' he is after it, the reasons they ascribe these Attributes to her are different as it is explained in the next paragraph. It may be stated that at the sequel of the play Higgins changes his mind again towards Eliza's Attributes due to the actions she takes and does not take. On the contrary, Higgins is portrayed as a steady Carrier of his Attributes, which are shared by both characters.

The main reason for the disagreement between Eliza and Higgins is that she acts as 'a good girl' with the aim of getting some affection from Higgins. The male character understands the Attribute 'good' in her utterance as a synonym for 'silly' regarding her acceptance of his impositions. Before Higgins is challenged to teach Eliza, it may be stated that she could not have gone against the Attributions he ascribes to her, for example, 'baggage' (p. 37), and silly (p. 39), but after the two men set the arrangements for the bet (p. 40), she could have defended her against the bad Attributes Higgins ascribes to her, such as 'a draggletailed guttersnipe' (p. 40).

Eliza does not complain until she realizes Higgins' practical and cold nature. Even noticing these attributes on him since the first encounter, she thinks he can have developed some kind of caring friendship the time they stayed together, as she has. She also thinks of the Attribute 'good' as meaning 'silly' as Higgins thought, when she faces the fact that she can not understand his clear mind and cold intentions before.

The next two topics study the Attributes given by/to Eliza and Higgins to themselves in order to understand how their representation changes

and/or does not change throughout the play as well as what they may represent in the characters' life.

4.3.1 Relational Processes used by Henry Higgins

Considering the way the male character views himself as a human being, he seems to be very confident and proud of his views even being a social misfit. Higgins is not intimidated (as he says in Act V) by anything; he concentrates on his jobs and does not spend time with small talk or useless conversation, which he finds unbearable. Higgins sees himself as someone who does not need anyone's cooperation or affection. He says:

Higgins: ... I have my own soul: my own spark of divine fire....(p. 133)

Although the possessive Attributive clause above uttered by Higgins seems arrogant, it is the way he thinks of himself. He does not care if people think he is arrogant because he is confident enough to believe that he really is what he utters to be.

The fact that he wants to impose his ideals on other people makes him very unfriendly. He wants everybody to think like him. For example, he wants Eliza to forget about her emotional side because, according to him, it only makes her silly. She is different from him.

The following Attributes, whose Carrier is Eliza, are given by Higgins. The aim is to bring examples of how Higgins sees Eliza in the play:

- 1- She is so *deliciously low ... so horribly dirty*. (p. 40)
- 2- You are an *ungrateful wicked girl*. (p. 43)
- 3- ...and you're *not bad looking*. ...you're what I call *attractive*. (p. 106)
- 4- Eliza: you're *an idiot*. (p. 134)
- 5- Eliza: you're *a fool*. (p. 136)

Utterances 1 and 3 are contradictory, which means that Eliza's visual representation changes in Higgins' point of view. In 3, he assures Eliza that because she has physically changed, she is able to find a husband, although he does not reject her idea of working.

In 2, Higgins sees Eliza as an ‘ungrateful wicked girl’ because he thinks she should accept his rules once he is going to do something for/on her. Again, it may be understood as a way Higgins imposes his rules on Eliza; his Attributes enable him to do that (he is rich and a talented professor).

The Attributes ‘fool’ an ‘idiot’ are given to Eliza because of her need to have someone by her side, i. e., because she thinks different from him. In the beginning of the play, she is a fool and idiot because she obeys orders expecting to be admired; in the sequel it is because she lets emotions interfere in the brilliant future she could have after being helped by him.

The relational process may also contribute to demonstrate that the male and the female characters may be viewed as stereotypes of two different worlds where man and woman do not get in agreement concerning their opinions. Therefore, they live in constant conflict for not accepting each other’s views.

4.3.2 Relational Processes used by Eliza Doolittle

The female character presents herself in Act II by insistently claiming she is the Carrier of the Attribute ‘good girl’ as shown below:

I’m a *good girl*, I am. (pp. 41, 43, 45)

I’m a *good girl*. (p. 46)

I always been a *good girl*. (p. 46)

It seems that she does not either naively or defensively. She wants Higgins to teach her how to speak properly so she portrays herself as being a ‘good girl’ who deserves to be helped. That is also the way she defends herself against Higgins’ insults and threats.

Eliza may think that the fact of being a good girl was good enough for being helped. By overemphasizing her quality of being ‘good’ she may believe that more important than what she does is what she is. It also highlights her powerless position in the play where the skillful man should take pity on the poor flower girl and act on her because she is a ‘good girl’.

After the bet is over, Eliza still naively thinks that her Attributes of ‘poor good girl’ will convince Higgins to be kinder to her. She acts as if she has no alternative in life other than staying in Higgins’ house as the relational processes show below:

Liza: Whats to *become* of me? Whats to *become* of me?
(p. 104) (...)

Liza: ...You wouldn’t care if I *was* dead. I’m nothing to you. ... not so much as them slippers. (p. 104) (...)

Liza: No. Nothing more for you to worry about. ... Oh God! I wish I *was* dead. (p. 105)

When she sees Higgins’ relief for not having to teach her anymore and his lack of acknowledgment for her efforts, she gets nervous (“The creature is nervous after all”,(p.104), and argues with Higgins. Concerning the relational process, some of the Attributes Eliza does not give/gives to herself are:

- 1- I’m *nothing* to you – not so much as them slippers. (p. 104)
- 2- I’m *no preacher*. (p. 134)
- 3- I’m a *slave now*. (p. 135)
- 4- I’m *not under feet*. (p. 136)

In utterance 1, Eliza gives to herself the attribute ‘nothing’, which shows she expects to be something to him. She expects an Attribute related to solidarity, although she is aware that she is used as an experiment by him to prove his professional capacity. Eliza is aware of this fact because she is present when Higgins and Pickering make the bet, she hears Higgins say ‘she is no use to anybody but me’ (Act II). Through her utterance she expects Higgins to develop some kind of either admiration or gratitude for her. The irritation she utters in 1 demonstrates how important it is for her to be something for him. It may be understood as a sign of intimacy, where she wants attention and care from him, a characteristic of the private domain that is not part of Higgins’ world.

In 2, Eliza may have meant that she does not know how to preach or talk about social matters in general like Higgins does. What she knows is to notice people, and she remarks that he does not notice her. It may also lead to the interpretation that by not being a preacher, she can notice him, and complain about his lack of attention towards her.

In utterance 3, Eliza considers herself (being a slave of her new condition) a 'salve' of her new class because besides speaking like a lady of class, she does not know how to remain in an upper class without Higgins' help. Eliza also believes that the knowledge Higgins has given to her does not allow her to go back to the place she came from.

Eliza gives the Attribute 'slave' to herself because although she wants to belong to a higher social level for that would improve her chances in life, after spending time with Higgins, she wants a 'friendly' (p.136) affection from him back. Because she comes 'to care' for him (p. 136), Eliza expects Higgins to develop the same feelings for her, which he does not. While Eliza sees herself as a slave for not having affection back, Higgins explains how pleasant it is going to be their lives as fellows speaking the same perfect English as it should be. To Higgins, affection is out of question, and he does not understand how Eliza cannot find his way of thinking fine. To Eliza, the lack of feelings from him towards her is all she sees and it makes the situation unbearable to her.

In 4, Eliza meant that she is an honest girl who accepts to be trained because of the 'pleasant' time they spent together, and not for the dresses she got. An evident fact in utterance 4 is that Eliza continuously asks for attention back because of what she 'is' or 'is not', more than of what she 'does' or 'does not do'.

While Higgins is satisfied for achieving the goal he establishes when he starts to teach the cockney flower girl, Eliza is not satisfied for getting what she has asked for, i.e., speaking 'proper' English in order to be able to get a job as an assistant in a flower shop (p. 37). Higgins' mind is so rational that he does not understand what she means by saying she is nothing to him:

(...)

Higgins [in his loftiest manner] Why have you begun going on like this? May I ask whether you complain of your treatment here?

Liza: No.

Higgins: Has anyone behaved badly to you? Colonel Pickering? Mrs. Pearce? Any of the servants?

Liza: No.

Higgins: I'm glad to hear it. [*He moderates his tone*]. Perhaps you're tired after the strain of the day. Will you

have a glass of champagne? [*He moves towards the door*].

Liza: No [*Recollecting her manners*] Thank you.

(...)

(*Pygmalion*, 1973:105)

As Eliza cannot understand what goes on in Higgins' mind either, she considers herself 'ignorant' for her lack of practical view:

5- I'm *too ignorant*. (p. 105)

6- I'm only a *common ignorant girl*. (p. 108)

Eliza cannot stand the fact that Higgins finds normal his victory on the bet without giving any credits to nor caring for her. The following possessive Attributive clauses may reveal Eliza as an emotional-oriented Carrier:

7- I got *my feelings* same as anyone else. (p. 43)

8- Oh, you've *no feelings* in your heart. (p. 44)

9- ...I have *my feelings* the same as anyone else. (p. 47)

(...)

Higgins: ...You have wounded me to the heart.

Liza [*thrilling with hidden joy*] I'm glad. I've got a *little of my own back*.

(*Pygmalion*, 1973: 109)

In the final conversation she has with Higgins, where she is sure that she is not going to accept his coldness, she gets strong and feels powerful because she looks at the facts in a cold way, like her professor does. By doing that, Eliza realizes that she can be even more powerful than he is. The statement above is based on the Attributes she gives to herself in the following utterances:

Liza: What a *fool* I was not to think of it before! ... You said I had a *finer ear* than you. And I can *be civil and kinder to people*, which is more than you can. ... when all the time I had only to lift my fingers to *be as good as you*... (p. 138)

Eliza realizes she was a fool for obeying him and letting him call her names. Through the possessive Attribute clause ‘I had a finer ear’, she understands that she is a more potential learner than him as well as she can socialize (be civil and kind), but he does not. Eliza takes her emotional side away and changes her way of seeing herself, and the way Higgins sees her. He likes what she says, and even gets proud of having ‘made a woman of her’ because of what she said in the utterance above. He considers that she is prepared to be a friend of his:

Higgins: ...Five minutes ago you were like a millstone round my neck. Now you are a tower of strength. A consort battleship. You and I and Pickering will be three old bachelors instead of two men and a silly girl. (p.138)

Higgins sees Eliza is ready to succeed and invites her to join his reality (be the Carrier of the Attribute ‘bachelor’), but it may be stated that she does not want to belong to Higgins’ world of practical affairs. She marries Freddy because he has the conceptions that a husband should have in her point of view: “one to whom she would *be* his nearest and fondest and warmest interest” (p. 142)

Eliza gets stronger after talking to Higgins, and does what she wants to do without worrying about Higgins. After her marriage, it seems that Higgins, who realized the potential the girl had if she did not care about hurting anyone’s feelings, continues to think she is silly for acting emotionally (marry someone who loves her). Eliza, who continues working at his house after her marriage, believes that she is ‘no more to him than them slippers’ (p. 155) . Even being emotional (what is a negative point to Higgins) Eliza reached her goals which were to speak ‘properly’, to belong to an upper class, to marry someone who cared for her, and to work. The only thing she does not get is attention from her professor because of what she wants him to know she is, i.e., a good girl.

The characters hardly give good Attributes to one another. As Higgins never admits any kind of merit or affection for Eliza, she gives negative attributes to him. In Eliza’s utterances where Higgins is the Carrier, his Attributes are mostly negative ones. Some of them (utterances 4 and 5) are not common of human beings. She attributes them to Higgins though

because she may think that his nature is so cold that he does not seem to be made of flesh and bone:

- 1- You are *no gentleman*. (p.41)
- 2- You are *a brute*. (p. 43)
- 3- You are born *a preacher*. (p. 132)
- 4- You are *a motor bus*. (p. 132)
- 5- You are *a devil*. (p. 133)
- 6- You are *nothing but a bully*. (p. 137)

Eliza has the same impression of Higgins the whole time she spends with him. He does not give any sign of affection to any matter or anybody, but his mother, who gives to him the idea of a 'lovable woman' (p. 70), although she cannot receive him at her house when she has guests because of his lack of politeness.

The analysis of the relational processes intended to show how the characters position themselves in the world as well as their different view of it by highlighting the Attributes given to the Carriers, which may insinuate the importance that the characters give to issues concerning work, education, love and care.

5. Conclusion

The study of transitivity realized through the analysis of the processes shows that the male character is the doer of more practical actions than the female. The material processes show that while the male professor does actions to prove his capacity to himself and to the public world, the female student expects to be recognized by the professor for the actions she competently performs. It is realized through the mental processes that the female is moved by her emotions while the male does not show any sign of perception or affection in his nature. The study of the material and mental processes suggests that the male acts more while the female perceives more. It is not a matter of capacity, though, but differences in point of view. The study of the mental processes also shows that the female character gets more involved with people that she interacts with than the male. In the male's point of view, this characteristic not only prevents her to be seen as a powerful figure, but also makes it difficult for her to achieve success.

The relational processes expressed by the female in the dialogues taken from acts II and IV show that she sees herself as inferior to the male due to the few opportunities she had in life. In the last act, though, the

relational processes show that the female changes her representation of the world after realizing that her silence and representation as a powerless flower seller does not mean much to the male. It is in Act V, when she does not act emotionally and is not concerned with hurting anyone's feeling that both characters realize she is as powerful as the male. It may be stated that the three processes used by her in the last dialogue she has with the male that she sees herself even more powerful than him because besides working, she can interact with people while he can not. It is possible because she is able to perceive the human side of people and as a result, that makes her likeable. The attitudes taken by her afterwards, though, (marrying Freddy and continuing working at Higgins' house), stress her sentimental and dominated position.

Concerning gender, the woman's representation of the world in the play highlights capacity, courage and power of decision to escape from the status quo by not marrying a wealthy man to be safe and supported. However, it still associates women with marriage and affection. Wareing (in Mills, 1995b) states that a text can bring 'two conflicting messages about female characters' (p. 214), describing women both as passive and active in their relationships. That's why the analysis of a text has to go as far as to find women's real representation as a whole rather than simply to point out the negative attitudes of women as opposite to positive men's ones. (Mills, 1995b).

The analysis of the transitivity system investigated the instances of the material, mental and relational processes in an attempt to suggest who has more power of doing things, and how this power is accomplished and realized through the study of the processes focused. This study aims to call people's attention to the power of language in the construction of reality, and to provoke a deeper understanding specifically in gender relations in order to contribute to a greater social awareness.

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