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Paralysed: A Systemic Functional Analysis of James Joyce's "Eveline"

ABSTRACT

In homage to the work of Uroš Mozetič, the paper takes as its starting point previously developed suggestions about how the language of "Eveline" conveys a picture of the heroine as a passive, paralysed character. Using Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics as a model of stylistic analysis, it investigates the contribution of both the ideational and the interpersonal metafunctions to the meaning of the text. The results extend and amend some ideas from the literature, such as the supposed prevalence of stative verbs, and suggest that while the short story as a whole predominantly uses material processes, their potential for change is mitigated by Joyce's aspect, tense, and usuality choices. Eveline as the main character crucially has the role of a Senser, observing and internally reacting to the world around her, and even the processes in which she acts upon things and people are modalised and shown to be either hypothetical or instigated by others.

Keywords: Dubliners; stylistics; Systemic Functional Linguistics; transitivity

Paralizirana: Sistemsko-funkcijska analiza "Eveline" Jamesa Joycea

POVZETEK

V spomin na Uroša Mozetiča so izhodišče članka obstoječe razprave o tem, kako jezik kratke zgodbe »Evelina« slika glavno junakinjo kot pasivno in paralizirano. Kot model za stilistično analizo je uporabljena hallidayevska sistemsko-funkcijska teorija jezika, s pomočjo katere članek raziskuje prispevek tako predstavne kot medosebne metafunkcije k pomenu besedila. Rezultati analize dopolnjujejo in do neke mere popravljajo ideje, znane iz literature, npr. glede domnevne prevlade glagolov stanja. Ugotoviti je mogoče, da čeprav kratka zgodba v celoti uporablja predvsem materialne glagolske dogodke, njihov potencial za spremembe zmanjšujejo Joyceove izbire v kategorijah glagolskega vida, časa in običajnosti. Evelina kot glavna oseba posebej izstopa v vlogi Zaznavalca, ki opazuje svet okoli sebe in se nanj notranje odziva. Celo glagolski dogodki, kjer aktivno deluje na stvari in ljudi, so modalizirani in prikazani kot hipotetični ali sproženi s strani drugih.

Ključne besede: Ljudje iz Dublina; prehodnost; sistemsko-funkcijsko jezikoslovje; stilistika

Paralysed: A Systemic Functional Analysis of James Joyce's "Eveline"

1 Introduction

This paper is a linguist's response to suggestions put forth by Uroš Mozetič (1997a, 2000a, 2000b, 2004, 2007) with regard to James Joyce's short story "Eveline". The story was first published in *The Irish Homestead* on 10 September 1904 (Gifford [1967] 1982, 48) and was then submitted for publication in 1905 as part of Joyce's collection of short stories *Dubliners*, but that collection did not in fact see the light of day until as late as 1914, mainly on account of its inflammatory language (Kelly 1991). Together with *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Dubliners* brought Joyce literary acclaim, and "Eveline" has come to be seen as an integral part of the collection, which is united around several recurring as well as gradually developing themes, such as the city of Dublin and a progression from young age to maturity, but most importantly paralysis (see e.g., Ghiselin 1956; Kelly 1991).

A great part of Mozetič's work centres on narrative perspective and focalization in this particular short story, among others, and on the role played by speech and thought representation. In relation to this, he mentions several linguistic traits as constitutive elements of Eveline's perceptual point of view and the interpretation of the narrative. His main argument (2000b, 95) is that Eveline's perceptual point of view and the way it is constructed are intimately linked to "the ideational function of language, which creates a static quality in the story, reflecting the rigidity and numbness of the characters, and their lack of power to leave behind the constraints of their environment or to change their lifestyle." (Translated by M. K.)

Paying attention to Chatman's (1969, [1978] 1980)¹ and Scholes's (1978/1979)² analyses, Mozetič develops and makes more concrete some of their fairly intuitive ideas and uses them, in a framework inspired partly by Systemic Functional Linguistics, to categorize and account for translation shifts occurring in the Slovene translation of the short story. Importantly, he (2000b, 95) attributes the pervasive feeling of paralysis, crucial to all *Dubliners* stories, to "the predominant use of the perfective aspect and so-called stative verbs." The analysis presented here investigates the ideas suggested by Mozetič, Chatman, and Scholes, and looks at how a Systemic Functional approach can help us to understand and flesh out Joyce's linguistic manoeuvring in the portrayal of Eveline.

2 Systemic Functional Linguistics as a Model of Stylistic Analysis

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), a model of language originally proposed by Michael Halliday and further developed by many linguists across the world (with a particularly visible presence in Australia), sees language as a multi-faceted phenomenon. Any piece of language says something about the world around (and in) us as part of communication between fellow human beings, and

¹ Chatman's (1969) paper uses "Eveline" to investigate and apply some ideas by Roland Barthes and Tzvetan Todorov with regard to narrative models. In his later book, where "Eveline" is used to exemplify several theoretical concepts in literary analysis, Chatman ([1978] 1980, 11, 93) is overtly critical of both his earlier article and Scholes's (1978/1979) analysis.

² Scholes (1978/1979) similarly conceives of this story not as a goal in itself but rather as a convenient testing ground to show how narrative theories developed by Tzvetan Todorov, Gérard Genette, and Roland Barthes can be fruitfully combined.

must necessarily be structured in some way in order to convey a message. This multifunctionality of language has found its grammatical expression in the idea of the three metafunctions, so that a given text can be analysed at the same time from an ideational, interpersonal, and textual point of view (e.g., Halliday and Matthiessen 1999, 2014; Halliday and Hasan [1985] 1990).

SFL theory has always striven to provide an exhaustive account of language as used in human interaction, and has consistently placed great emphasis on being “applicable” (e.g., Halliday [2002] 2007). While Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) work on cohesion has perhaps enjoyed the greatest popularity in the world of literary studies among SFL-inspired texts, SFL principles have been applied to the domain of stylistics quite extensively, informing, for instance, also works by such authors as Leech and Short [1981] (1995) or Simpson (2004).

Specific examples of SFL analyses range from Halliday’s (1971) own analysis of William Golding’s *The Inheritors* to work by Hasan ([1985] 1989) or Miller and Turci (2007), as well as Slovene linguists (e.g., Bizjak 2005; Kavalir 2006, 2011, 2012; Kovačič 1992; Plemenitaš 1998, 2004a, 2004b, with some focusing more on linguistic aspects and others further exploring the contribution of linguistic patterns to the overall make-up of particular genres or works of art) and literary scholars (e.g., Mozetič 2000a, 2004). SFL contributions to Joycean studies include, for instance, Nørgaard (2003) and Kennedy (1982) but do not consider “Eveline” in any depth.

3 Ideational Metafunction: Process Types

3.1 Overview of Process Types

The ideational metafunction refers to the text as a representation, and at the level of the clause, which is analysed here, comprises the events in “Eveline” narrated as various configurations, or figures, of processes with their participants and circumstances. The grammatical system that expresses these various roles is transitivity, and each clause is assigned a particular transitivity structure.

Transitivity is traditionally thought of as a verbal category, and in SFL too the figure centres on the process. According to SFL (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014), there are three major types of processes: material processes, or the processes of doing and happening; mental processes, or the processes of sensing; and relational processes, or processes of being and having. The three minor types are verbal, behavioural, and existential processes. What follows in Table 1 is an overview of the types of processes found in “Eveline”, and their proportions, analysed in accordance with the guidelines in Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

TABLE 1. Overview of process types in “Eveline”.

Type of process	Of all clauses	
	N	%
Material	133	47.2
Relational	57	20.2
Mental	41	14.5
Verbal	23	8.2
Behavioural	14	5.0

Existential	5	1.8
N/A	9	3.2
Total	282	100

3.2 Ambiguities

How objective and replicable is such a classification? Based on both semantic and grammatical criteria (in fact, SFL claims that grammatical features stem from semantic distinctions), prototypical examples (all taken from “Eveline” itself) are readily categorized with presumed inter- and intra-rater reliability across the SFL community:

- a) Material: *Then a man from Belfast bought the field*
- b) Relational: *Her father was not so bad then*
- c) Mental: *She knew the air*
- d) Verbal: *He said*
- e) Behavioural: *inhaling the odour of dusty cretonne*
- f) Existential: *One time there used to be a field there [...]*
- g) N/A: verbless clauses, e.g., *No!*

The great majority of examples can thus be unequivocally classified, but sometimes problems do occur. There are two primary reasons for difficulties in analysing specific examples, metaphors and systemic indeterminacy.

Using metaphorical language means overlaying two different meanings onto one piece of language, or saying one thing to express another. This is not in fact a problem in terms of qualitative analysis, where we acknowledge both meanings present, but only in terms of quantitative analysis if an item should be unidirectionally attributed to only one category. Metaphors are particularly important in fiction, and a strategy that is generally popular is presenting mental processes as material ones:

- *She tried to weigh each side of the question*
- *Through the wide doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the boat*

Another type of metaphorical usage that seems particularly typical of “Eveline” is disguising behavioural processes as material processes where Eveline’s actions concern her own body parts:³

- *leaning her head against the window curtain*
- *and she kept moving her lips in silent prayer*
- *She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal*
- *Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition*

³ Mozetič (2000a, 87; see also Gana 2011, 53) makes the interesting observation that the same event is rendered twice, once at the beginning of the story as *Her head was leaned against the window curtains* in the passive voice, and then again later on as *she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain* in the active voice. He interprets this as the author’s intervention to suggest a temporary illusion that Eveline has in the meantime “acquired some of that absolutely necessary decisiveness to make the fateful step offered to her” (translated by M. K.). See also Harding’s (2003, 40) suggestion that “[l]ike many of the characters [in Dubliners], [Eveline] too suffers from a gradual wearing down of the will in yet another one of Dublin’s ‘little brown houses.’”

Altogether, 8 clauses can be analysed as being in some way metaphorical, with the remaining two being a relational clause that is in fact behavioural (*especially whenever there were people listening*), and a case of double metaphor, *Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish*. On the surface, this is a material clause, and the underlying process is not in fact verbal but mental. As far as quantitative analysis is concerned, they are all classified according to their surface category, i.e., mostly as material processes.

The second major cause of ambiguity is what Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, 216–17) call systemic indeterminacy, brought about by the fact experience is “a semiotic space,” with regions that represent different process types:

The regions have core areas and these represent prototypical members of the process types; but the regions are continuous, shading into one another and these border areas represent the fact that the process types are fuzzy categories [...] This is not an artefact of the way we describe the system; it is a fundamental principle on which the system is based – the principle of systemic indeterminacy. The world of our experience is highly indeterminate; and this is precisely how the grammar construes it in the system of process type [...]

Examples of such indeterminacy or fuzziness occur for instance with verbal processes that are close to material and behavioural ones, such as *speak*, or with behavioural processes that may also be close to either mental (e.g., *look*) or material (e.g., *sing*) processes:

- *that he was speaking to her*
- *She looked round the room*
- *and sang a little*

3.3 Stative Verbs

The analysis suggests that roughly half of all clauses in the short story are construed as processes of doing and happening, a finding that is in direct opposition to how most readers and literary scholars understand “Eveline”. Mozetič’s (2000a, 85–86) overview of relevant literary criticism, for instance, finds that the story is seen as thematising “lack of power, despair, and resignation.” The presence of material processes is also notable if compared to a general, registerially mixed corpus of 8,425 analysed clauses (Matthiessen 1999): there, the order of importance of the various types mirrors that of Table 1, but material processes are somewhat less present with a proportion of approximately 40%, and relational processes show a greater advantage, representing almost 36% of all clauses.

As explained above, some of the material processes are in fact metaphorical and represent other types, and yet others can be located in the semiotic space on the border with some other kinds of processes, which means overall the impact of material processes is lower than the number alone suggests. However, this is by no means the whole story and there are other characteristics of the writing style that offset the predominance of material clauses. One such important issue is that of agentivity, to be discussed in Section 4, but in the domain of processes alone, the point made by Mozetič and Chatman regarding verb choices is worth reconsidering.

The analysis of process types shows the argument that “Eveline” is characterized by a style that uses predominantly stative verbs does not in fact prove true. If relational, mental, and existential processes are lumped together as an approximation of the category of stative verbs, they account

for 102, or 37.9% of all clauses – still considerably less than the 134, or 47.2% of clauses realized by material processes.

4 Ideational Metafunction: Agentivity and Aspect

The role Eveline plays in the story can be investigated more exhaustively by looking at the participant functions she realizes in the verbal configurations. The analysis presented in this section confirms many of the suggestions made by Mozetič and Chatman, but the SFL approach proves considerably more powerful in yielding interpretations than traditional grammatical models do and thus allows the analysis to go both further and deeper into the questions of agentivity.

4.1 Eveline as a Non-Actor

While the analysis of transitivity structures in “Eveline” does not support or explain the suggestion that there is a pervading sense of passivity, the analysis of participant functions the character of Eveline has definitely does show she is construed as a passive heroine of her own story. Out of 282 clauses that make up the text, only 149, or a little more than half, include Eveline as a participant, with 5 more including her as a Circumstance, e.g., *after all he had done for her*, where a Hallidayan analysis would have *for her* as a Circumstance of Cause.

In SFL, the participant functions correspond to the figure, or the configuration that centres on the process and so are unique to each process type. The categories represented when it comes to the character of Eveline are the following:

- Actor: *which she had dusted once a week for so many years*
- Senser: *but she liked Harry too*
- Carrier: *because she was a girl*
- Goal: *People would treat her with respect then*
- Behaver: *She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror*
- Receiver: *and he told her stories of the terrible Patagonians*
- Recipient: *In the end he would give her the money*
- Sayer: *She answered nothing*
- Target: *What would they say of her in the Stores*
- Client: *Not long before [...] he had read her out a ghost story*
- Phenomenon: *he would miss her*

The quantitative analysis of participant functions Eveline has in the story in Table 2 yields a number of insights. First of all, in material processes the role Eveline plays is split between that of the Actor – the entity bringing the process about, the Goal – the participant somehow impacted by the process, the Recipient – the participant that goods are given to, and the Client – the participant that services are done for; out of the 72 material processes that involve Eveline, 49, or 68.1% present her as the participant responsible for the event, and 23, or 31.9% depict her as somehow affected by the action but not the one that does it.

TABLE 2. Participant functions of Eveline (transitivity).

Participant function	N	%
Actor	49	32.9
Senser	32	21.5
Carrier	22	14.8
Goal	16	10.7
Behaver	10	6.7
Receiver	7	4.7
Recipient	4	2.7
Sayer	3	2.0
Target	2	1.3
Client	3	2.0
Phenomenon	1	0.7
Total	149	100

Compared to the general distribution of process types in the text, the passages that concern Eveline herself are characterized to a greater extent by mental processes, and the role typical of Eveline is that of Senser – the entity that “feels, thinks, wants or perceives” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 249). This role is more important than that of Carrier – the entity to which some quality, identity or possession is attributed.⁴ Altogether, in 100, or 67.1%, of 149 clauses in which she acts as a participant, Eveline is a non-Actor; taking into account all the clauses, she is a non-Actor 82.6% of the time.

The crucial lessons here are that, absolutely speaking, Eveline is less commonly the Actor than other subjects around her (in 17.4% of all clauses, compared to the fact that material clauses actually comprise 47.2% of the story), and that compared to others, she more commonly acts as the Senser (21.5% of the time, compared to 14.5% of all clauses in the story containing mental processes). This spells out Chatman’s (1969, 28) suggestion:

Eveline is almost never the subject of a verb conveying a genuine active meaning. The predicates with which she is paired are predominantly intransitives, copulas, or passives; if they are technically in the active transitive class, they are verbs of perception [...] which describe her as doing nothing more than passively perceiving her environment.

4.2 Eveline as a Non-Agent

Besides transitivity, we can also analyse the ergative structure of a clause (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 333):

For purposes of analysis we could leave it at that [transitivity structure]. But it is not the whole story; so we shall pursue the investigation one stage further [...] It is true that,

⁴ See also Mozetič’s (2000a, 59) remark that Eveline as the carrier of both the narrative perspective and the focalization might best be described “by Stanzel’s expression *character-reflector*”.

from one point of view, all these types of process are different. Material, behavioural, mental, verbal, relational and existential processes each have a grammar of their own. At the same time, looked at from another point of view they are all alike. At another level of interpretation, they all have the same grammar: there is just one generalized representational structure common to every English clause.

Here, in a complementary perspective, only four participant functions are distinguished across process types: Medium, Agent, Beneficiary, and Range.

TABLE 3. Participant functions of Eveline (ergativity).

Participant function	N	%
Agent	23	15.4
Medium	112	75.2
Beneficiary	13	8.7
Range	1	0.7
Total	149	100

What Table 3 shows is that Eveline is primarily (75.2% of the time) construed as “the medium through which the process is actualized” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 336), either as the performer of non-material processes or as the affected participant in material ones. In Halliday’s classification, the Agent is the external cause of processes which are not seen as self-engendered. Grammatically, this function usually relates to the subject of a ditransitive verb, and semantically to the entity that affects the world around it driving the “doing” and the “happening”. As a consequence, only some Actors are also Agents, and few other participants can be Agents at all.

Eveline realizes the function of the Agent in only 23 cases, which represents 15.4% of the clauses where she is a participant in the process, and only 8.2% of all clauses. This is an important source of the perceived passivity of the heroine. Grammatically speaking, “Eveline” does not so much suggest that people in general are paralysed as that Eveline herself is. Other people can do things – her father and Frank act on the world, people she knows leave their homes, the man from Belfast buys fields and builds houses – and it is Eveline who is pushed about by outer forces, who reacts by feeling and thinking about the world around her but is unable to exert her own will upon others. Affected and constrained, she goes through the motions, unable to change her circumstances through her own actions.

Notably, as already explained above, 6 of the 24 clauses where Eveline is represented as an Agent are in fact metaphors for behavioural and mental processes, mainly cases where she acts upon herself – because that is the scope of her ability to influence the world:

- *leaning her head against the window curtain*
- *and she kept moving her lips in silent prayer*
- *She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal*

4.3 Aspect

Going back to Mozetič's original suggestions, the idea that it is the predominance of the perfective aspect that establishes a sense of paralysis comes closer to what the data reveal. What is grammatically different about material processes compared to the other types is that the unmarked choice in the present is the progressive aspect,⁵ for instance, *We are eating chicken*, and the choice of the indefinite present tense, *We eat chicken*, is marked for the additional meaning of habit or general truth. The only other type which allows an unmarked progressive aspect is the behavioural one (e.g., *Why are you laughing?*) but here the indefinite tense can be used with very much the same meaning (*Why do you laugh?*); see Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, 250). All other process types use the present indefinite as the unmarked tense selection, with the present progressive possible for certain meanings. In the past, the difference in the meaning of the aspect is still present but somewhat different. In narratives, the use of the progressive is typically associated with establishing the background against which foregrounded actions take place.

Of the 282 clauses in “Eveline”, only 9 feature the progressive aspect, and only the last 4 of those come close to the backgrounding function:

- *these ladies are waiting*
- *When they were growing up*
- *He was standing at the gate*
- *he was lodging in the house on the main road [...]*
- *that they were courting*
- *Her time was running out*
- *Her father was becoming old lately*
- *He was drawing her into them*
- *that he was speaking to her*

The first of these examples is part of a quotation, the second acts as the background to a previous event, and the following three establish the story of how Eveline and her sailor met and fell in love, but only the final four examples set up the background for the actions in the time frame of the story. It is also noticeable that only two of them are material processes (*run out*, *draw*).

These choices in the grammar of material processes suggest that they are, as far as this story is concerned, seen as being somewhat closer to relational and mental (i.e., “stative”) processes, and there is less focus on what material clauses are normally seen to suggest: “a ‘material’ clause construes a quantum of change in the flow of events as taking place through some input of energy” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 224). By stripping it of its inherent ability, that is, to construe an action as unfolding gradually in time, both the input of energy and the resultant change in the flow of events seem, on the whole, to be diminished.

5 Interpersonal Metafunction

In Hallidayan linguistics, the interpersonal metafunction has to do with enacting social relationships, which at the level of the clause translates into attributing and characterizing responsibility for the validity of what is said.

⁵ In the Hallidayan model, aspect is in fact treated as part of tense, with *are eating* labelled as present-in-present, and *were eating* as present-in-past.

5.1 Modal Assessment

When we investigate the grammar of “Eveline” with regard to the judgement on the status of what is being said, including all kinds of “assessments [...] that relate either to the proposition being exchanged [...] or the act of exchanging it” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 173), the most impressive finding is the pattern that is revealed in terms of what we can call “modalisations” of the processes expressed.

In as many as 32 clauses featuring material processes the action expressed by the verb is somehow modalised or mitigated. Eveline is implicated in every single one of these instances, and they often coincide with her being analysed as an Agent. The most common strategy used by Joyce is to introduce her actions as required by others. There are 4 clauses where obligation is expressed using the modal expression *have to* (expressing a high degree of objective, i.e., external positive obligation) and only one clause using the modal verb *must* (expressing a high degree of subjective, i.e., internal positive obligation):

- *Of course she had to work hard, both in the house and at business*
- *Then she had to rush out [...] and do her marketing*
- *And after that she had to meet her lover secretly*
- *She must escape!*

Apart from modal verbs, the other two means employed to show Eveline’s (putative) actions follow the will of somebody else are the use of the imperative mood (commands issued by Frank) and the particular reporting expressions *consent* and *promise*:

- *Come!*
- *He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow*
- *She had consented to go away, to leave her home*
- *[...] the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could*

One particular passage contains allegations about Eveline’s actions by her father; here they are mitigated by the fact he said such things “and much more, for he was usually fairly bad of a Saturday night.” His unreliable, presumably drunken state thus puts the veracity of his statements into question:

- *He said she used to squander the money [...] that he wasn’t going to give her his hard-earned money to throw about the streets*

In one case, the action is presented as a wish (*But she wanted to live*), and in 4 examples Eveline’s ability to carry out the action is explicitly questioned:

- *Then she had to rush out as quickly as she could*
- *to keep the home together as long as she could*
- *Could she still draw back*
- *the trouble was to get money from her father*

In as many as 7 clauses, the action is placed in the future but this future is negotiated, making it less than certain. For instance, in *Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home,*

the question is why this is not rendered simply as *Now she was going away like the others, leaving her home*; such language would present the actions as not only planned but fixed, sure to happen. The fact that various kinds of negotiated future frames, such as *be about to*, are used throughout the text sets the scene for the final act of the story and foreshadows the ending.⁶ In addition, the structure *be to* also includes a sense of obligation as discussed above:

- *But now that she was about to leave it*
- *She was about to explore another life with Frank*
- *She was to go away with him by the night-boat [...] and to live with him in Buenos Ayres*

Finally, many clauses with Eveline as the performer of the action are straightforwardly marked as non-assertive, meaning they pertain to the world of the hypothetical rather than the real. In the broad sense, most of the modal categories discussed above are examples of this, but to these can be added also the following:

- *and ask her had she any intention of buying Sunday's dinner*
- *If she went, tomorrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Ayres*
- *What would they say of her in the Stores when they found out that she had run away with a fellow*

Mozetič (2000a, 88–89; see also Scholes 1978/1979, 72) places a great deal of emphasis on the use of *would* in the text bringing about a duality of meaning where the interpretation might move from the simple future-in-the-past interpretation to the conditional *would* again signalling non-assertiveness.

5.2 Usuality

Another modal element that is particularly noticeable in “Eveline” is the significant presence of usuality. The first of the two means used to express it is the use of the modal expressions *used to* (14 clauses) and *would* (2 clauses) to express habits in the past, for instance:

- *One time there used to be a field there in which they used to play every evening*
- *The children of the avenue used to play together in that field*
- *Her father used to pass it with a casual word*
- *Like he used to go for Harry and Ernest*
- *she used to squander the money*
- *where she used to visit*
- *He used to call her Poppens out of fun*
- *In the end he would give her the money and ask her*

The second crucial strategy used is Mood Adjuncts denoting usuality, ranging from low (*sometimes* – 2 examples) through median (*usually* – 5 examples; *often* – 1 example) to high (*always* – 4 examples; *never* – 5 examples) usuality. Some sample clauses:

- *Even now she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence*
- *Sometimes he could be very nice*

⁶ See also Mozetič's (2000a, 85) remarks to the same effect, especially in comparison with the Slovene translation of the short story.

- *for he was usually fairly bad of a Saturday night*
- *She always gave her entire wages – seven shillings*
- *and [...] she always felt pleasantly confused*
- *Ernest, however, never played*
- *he had never gone for her*

This focus on usuality is so pronounced that quite often, in 5 cases, the two means of expressing usuality are combined to get double marking:

- *Her father used often to hunt them in out of the field with his blackthorn stick*
- *but usually little Keogh used to keep nix and call out when he saw her father coming*

All of this seems to suggest a stress on usuality that can rarely be seen in any text and is all the more remarkable given the fact that other kinds of modal meanings, such as probability, degree, and counter-expectancy are all but absent. Altogether 28 clauses, or 9.9%, contain at least one of the above markers of usuality. The most likely interpretation would be that these particular choices reinforce an impression of the world as fixed in its ways, with Eveline caught up in business-as-usual. What is more, additional ways of expressing usuality and temporality can be found elsewhere in the text masked as Circumstance, for instance:

- *especially whenever there were people listening*
- *which she had dusted once a week for so many years*
- *that the two young children [...] went to school regularly*
- *whom she had known all her life*
- *saying something about the passage over and over again*

Once this particular focus on usuality and the repetitiveness of life is revealed, Eveline's comment *Everything changes* becomes even more ironic (see also Harding 2003, 40).

6 Discussion

The language choices an author makes are choices in the meanings he or she wants to foreground: the same event can be rendered in different ways for different stylistic effects (see Kavalir 2012), but a similar stylistic effect can also be achieved using different means.⁷ The linguistic analysis presented here reveals how Joyce used language to paint a picture of Eveline as a passive character whose only option in life is to observe the world around her without the possibility of changing it. The strategies used to achieve it are different from those employed in, for instance, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, where the marked presence of relational and existential clauses, and the role of Carrier as the most important participant function of the main character Billy Pilgrim immediately explain the pervasive sense of passivity (Kavalir 2006).

The source of paralysis in "Eveline" is less obvious. Material clauses, which are processes of doing and happening, represent a notable half of all clauses – and yet nothing happens. What a closer look at transitivity structures suggests is that while actions are possible and carried out in the world around her, it is Eveline herself that is passive: instead of being the Actor in the material

⁷ One of the reasons why this kind of linguistic analysis of literary works is important also has to do with translation (see Mozetič 1997b).

events that concern her, she is often the affected party; sometimes she is in fact a Circumstance in her own life. This can be interpreted as suggesting Eveline's circumstances can only be changed by others, and a great burden of responsibility is placed on Frank (*Frank would save her; He would give her life*) and God (*she prayed to God to direct her, to show her*). Even more importantly, Eveline's main function seems to be that of Senser, registering the world around her and reacting to it internally but not externally.

Taking into account both process types and modal assessment, it becomes even clearer that Eveline is very rarely the source of action: out of the 23 clauses where she functions as the Agent, 6 are metaphorical and can be reanalysed as involving a Behavior or Senser, and a further 13 are cases where her actions are modalised to show she is not in fact the one responsible for them.

In a story that is about her, the "hero" Eveline only ever really does 4 things of her own volition, and it is revealing to see what they are: Eveline keeps the house together and sees to the care of her siblings, contributes her wages to the family budget, and dusts objects around the house – but as we find out elsewhere in the text, these are actually all actions she is bound to perform due to a promise to her dead mother. In his drastic depiction of a passive, paralysed character, Joyce uses a number of grammatical means to portray a heroine who never ever does anything meaningful to the world around her out of her own will.⁸

In light of all this, it is interesting to analyse the very final lines of the story:

Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips in silent fervent prayer.

A bell clanged upon her heart.

She felt him seize her hand:

"Come!"

All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the iron railing.

"Come!"

No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish!

"Eveline! Evvy!"

He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on but he still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition.

There is a clear contrast here between Frank, who is an Actor and an Agent in his life, and Eveline, who cannot act in any significant way. It is often little details that tweak the picture presented: Eveline gripping the iron railing with both hands would be much more purposeful and successful in her actions compared to an Eveline who is gripping with both hands *at* the iron railing; grammatically speaking, gripping the railing would present Eveline as an Agent, but Eveline who grips at the railing is a Medium.

⁸ Gana (2011, 52) rightly talks about "[t]he invisible forces of memory, legacy, and promise – which constitute the fulcrum upon which the plot of the story turns." Ben-Merre (2012) gives an overview of alternative readings of the ending and the story as a whole.

While some might argue that not doing anything is also a decision, what can also be observed here is the striking use of metonymy. Instead of acting upon the world, Eveline acts on herself, as previously discussed: she moves her lips and sets her face to Frank. What is more, however, Joyce has her body parts – rather than Eveline as a person – participate in the various actions: her body, her lips, her heart, her face, and her eyes; and it is in fact Eveline’s non-deliberate, non-volitional body parts that perform even the most important material actions instead of a sentient human being capable of exerting her will: it is her hands that clutch the iron, and it is her eyes that fail to send a message to Frank.

7 Conclusion

This paper is a linguist’s contribution to the study of James Joyce’s “Eveline” showing that a close analysis (in this case of the Systemic Functional kind, but possibly of other types as well) of the language of a text can help explain how certain stylistic effects are achieved, and can further act as support for some interpretations rather than others. Mozetič’s claim that it is the ideational function of language that creates “a static quality in the story reflecting the rigidity and numbness of the characters” turns out to be absolutely correct, but in addition to the ideational metafunction (particularly the choice of process types and participant functions), the interpersonal metafunction with its attendant modal meanings also plays an important role.

The perspectives presented here do not tell the whole story, however, and the data analysed could possibly be used for further investigations. It is a plausible hypothesis, for instance, that the important proportion of mental processes in clauses with Eveline as a participant is linked to the question of narrative perspective (point-of-view) and focalization, and the establishment of the heroine as a Senser is pertinent to the concept of free indirect style. Here, too, anyone exploring such avenues will find Uroš Mozetič’s work invaluable.

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