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**“He said she said: examining gender in selected
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“Children are not so serious as grown-ups and they love to laugh.”

- Roald Dahl

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Abstract

In the light of the #MeToo movement, research on gender equality has gained increased importance. One of the many areas in life which perpetually reflects inequality between males and females is children's literature. Books play a key role in the formation of socio-political principles amongst children. Hence, there is a recognised need for gender-responsive literary education. Recent studies related to teaching gender-responsively have found that the most popular children's books reflect and reaffirm biased power relations between men and women. Roald Dahl is only one of many authors that have been accused of depicting not only sexism, but also racism, antisemitism as well as general violent behaviours. Most studies in this field have adopted a more superficial qualitative content analysis of Dahl's books whilst largely ignoring quantitative data. This study set out to determine how Roald Dahl chose to depict female characters in three of his most popular books by adopting a mixed-methods approach. The research is based on female direct speech instances within *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *The Witches* and *Matilda*. For this thesis quantitative data from Transitivity Analysis were combined with qualitative methods from Feminist Stylistics. The principal finding of this research are degrading depictions of female characters in all three of the investigated books as well as the promotion of disparate gender expectations. An implication of this study is that educational systems should encourage critical reading to enable young readers to apply knowledge about modern cultural ideals to recognise inequality in literature.

Keywords: gender, Transitivity Analysis, Feminist Stylistics, Roald Dahl

1. Introduction

Recent trends in gender studies have led to a proliferation of research that focuses on the depiction of gender in media. With an increasing number of young children using the internet on a daily basis, significant interest has emerged in the field of socialisation through media. Children's books are also a form of media and have been the subject of many investigations over the past two decades. The importance of books for the intellectual and cultural development of a child is indisputable. However, the traditional stories read to and by them often depict stereotypical images of girls and women, which do not correspond with more modern views on gender. Some of the most famous authors of children's books have recently been criticised for being racist, sexist, classist and ableist. Many contemporary authors try to depict an inclusive picture of society to ensure equal representation. Nevertheless, books with traditional views on gender, for example, are still commonly read – often without questioning the implicit messages they convey about men and women.

Book sales increased during the Covid pandemic, as people were taking time for themselves more and stepping away from the digital sphere a little. Adults and children alike revisited books on their shelves that they had not read in a long time, including books from authors such as Roald Dahl. This led to an increase in complaints about the misogynistic and antisemitic views of the author, causing the Dahl family and Roald Dahl Story Company to issue an apology for “the understandable hurt caused by Roald Dahl” in December of 2020 ([Apology](#) 2020). These recent developments have inspired parents and educators to provide young readers with opportunities to explore ideologies and to recognise possible inequalities and contextualise them with contemporary views as well as their own. School curricula have adopted critical reading approaches enabling teachers to show students that the canon of school literature can and should be challenged. Additionally, many parents are becoming actively involved in expanding their children's world-view rather than restricting it through tediously selected books and forms of media. By teaching approaches such as those presented in the thesis at hand, we could contribute to an even more enlightened generation of readers.

1.1. Rationale

I can vividly recall reading Roald Dahl's book as a child. Not only as bed-time stories but also having them handed out in school and seeing the film adaptations on a regular basis. This comes to no surprise, seeing how popular the books still are, roughly 30 years after the author's death in 1990. This personal connection in itself was a starting point for my interest in the analysis.

Dahl wrote close to 20 books for children and several more for adult readers. According to a 1988 study by *The London Times* Professor Brian Cox deemed Dahl one of the most acceptable authors for five- to eleven-year-olds (Culley 1991: 59). However, commercial popularity often comes along with criticism and Catherine Butler describes: "he was (and remains) controversial" (Butler 2012: 1). His books have been critiqued on behalf of the inclusion of "vulgarity, fascism, violence, sexism, racism, occult overtones, promotion of criminal behaviour, and literary technique" (Culley 1991: 59).

These allegations have clearly sparked numerous studies to investigate the occurrence of the mentioned themes and how they impact young readers' images of the real world. Eleanor Cameron, for example, accuses the books of containing "all those Clock-work-Orange qualities which are actually destroying the society children are growing up in" (1976: 62). In return she asks the omnipresent question of who should be choosing the books children read. Her experience as a teacher and librarian showed that "those parent who haven't the courage or the awareness to be discriminating, or who, being disastrously indulgent or lazy and so take no care for what their children see or read, are going to be the last ones to make an effort to search out what is good" (1976: 63). Some of Dahl's books have even been banned from American school and public libraries due to their questionable contents. *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator* is one of them (Culley 1991: 67). A cause for concern here is that Dahl's stories are still popular amongst classroom reading projects and I myself have used them in ESL classes. Jonathan Culley investigates the fascination with Dahl's controversial work in his fittingly titled article "Roald Dahl – "It's about children and it's for children" – But is it suitable?" (1991). He argues that unconsciously derived satisfaction resulting from modern

mythology around society is the origin for the fascination amongst children. However, the connection between folklore, society and the child is one that is yet to be explored.

As briefly mentioned in the introductory section, Roald Dahl is a known antisemite, not based upon specific research done on him and his life, but because he said so himself. Antisemitic statements include: "There is a trait in the Jewish character that does provoke animosity [...] maybe it's a kind of lack of generosity towards non-Jews. I mean, there's always a reason why anti-everything crops up anywhere; even a stinker like Hitler didn't just pick on them for no reason" (Lange et al. 2019:279). Keeping in mind, Roald was an RAF pilot on the front-line fighting the German objective to wipe out the Jewish community. These reports make it difficult to justify the prevailing popularity of the author and have offered an incentive to many scholars to research in this area. Robert Vistris (2011) took a closer look at Dahl's depictions of Jews (as well as other British novelists' demonisation of Israel) and how he tried to justify these derogatory beliefs.

A further aspect which has been addressed to a greater extent is the alleged racism which occurs in a few of his books. In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, the reader can clearly make out the retrograde fantasy of 'happy enslavement' (Keyser 2017: 405) when Dahl writes about the Oompa-Loompas which work inside the factory for white male Willy Wonka. He "brought them over from Africa" (73) and pays them in chocolate beans for their hard physical work. Compared to the 1960s, the decade in which the book was originally published, this might have been less controversial than it is today. Jeanifer Tanusy (2020) is one of the many academics that have taken a closer look at racism in Dahl's books. Although some people may interpret the vivid descriptions of 'otherness' as a form of social criticism, researchers such as Tanusy (2020), Schober (2017) and Hoffmann (2010) look past the ambivalence to find more than subtle hints of Dahl's racism.

Finally, I must shift the focus the "-ism" that has received the most attention over the past five years – sexism. According to Alisdair Campbell (1981: 110) Dahl wrote moral fairy tales and deliberate stereotyping is a valid technique in such text-types. However, this conventionalised stereotyping seems to be the point of no return for many. Vidovic and Vidovic (2018: 219) point out, that children's books "reflect, reaffirm and promote cultural

values and power relations". If the books that they are reading reflect immense inequality between the genders, they will acquire this knowledge as cultural ideals and use this information to form a potentially patriarchal gender system to which they will always compare future (non-)fictional characters (2018: 219). An extensive body of research has found that Dahl presents the idea that girls/women and power do not go together, and if they do, the female character is quickly "denied to define her own powers" and consecutively "expected to be reintegrated into the [patriarchal] system at all costs" (Vidovic & Vidovic 2018: 228). With the development of the "Me-Too" movement against sexual abuse, harassment and rape culture, more focus has been put on the psychology of women under patriarchy. With patriarchy being such a dominant social system, it has become clear that it has to be addressed in schools as well. Hence, a good starting point has been looking at popular literature for children. Dahl has always been known to be controversial, making it easy to find reference points of sexist views in his books. Despite the growing body of examination done on gender (identity) in children's books, I believe there are still some gaps in research. The idea of self-representation through direct speech being one of the gaps I will be trying to fill throughout this thesis.

Through the analysis of direct speech instances it should become evident that the female characters in Dahl's books exhibit self-representation. Systemic Functional Linguistics, or more specifically Transitivity Analysis, seems to be an appropriate tool to investigate power relations within language through the labelling of Process Types and Participants. Sara Mills' (1995) Feminist Stylistic framework should then aid in identifying how gender concerns are linguistically encoded inside the literary texts (Montoro 2014: 346). The term gender concerns can encompass a plethora of things, however, in terms of this socio-political approach to Dahl's texts it will focus on the distribution of power amongst gender and who enacts on whom.

1.2. Research aims and objectives

This paper has three key aims. Firstly, the study aims to assess how Roald Dahl depicts female characters in three of his children's books. This will be done by analysing direct speech instances which include self-description on behalf of female protagonists. Hence, the examination will consider how Dahl believes girls and women talk about themselves. The second aim of this investigation is to determine which Process Types determine the female characters' dynamic interpretations. Finally, an aim of this thesis will be to suggest Transitivity Analysis as a conceptual theoretical framework that can be used to uncover the ideological views on gender that an author holds. I seek to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data to address the research gaps proposed in the rationale section of this paper.

1.3. Research questions

Having outlined the aims and objectives, I will present the research questions that will be addressed. In particular, this thesis will examine three research questions:

- 1) How does Roald Dahl use Transitivity Analysis to depict female characters in his children's books?
- 2) Which Process Types are used to convey the females' dynamism within their direct speech?
- 3) What effect do Transitivity choices have according to Feminist Stylistics?

2. Theoretical background

This section of the paper serves as an introduction to the theoretical frameworks that have been used to analyse the textual data whilst simultaneously providing a literature review of previous work done within these fields of research. The majority of analytical work lies within the broader theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics as first proposed by M.A.K. Halliday in his influential work *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985). It has since been reprinted to its fourth edition and has recently been revised by Christian Matthiessen (2014), who has published an astounding amount on SFL. However, the book I have consulted most frequently is the second edition of the introductory textbook, *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*, by Suzanne Eggins (2004). Although numerous textbooks have been published in more recent years, Eggins presents SFL not only as a theoretical framework but also as a tool for discourse analysis with examples and advice for personal use. This book served as an integral part of my understanding of SFL and, more specifically, how to use Transitivity Analysis in various texts.

While SFL and all its Metafunctions are highly informative, they do not fully suffice for the research endeavour of this thesis. Therefore, I have drawn on a second framework for the analysis of the three selected books by Roald Dahl. Sara Mills' seminal book *Feminist Stylistics* introduces the reader to a range of skills that can be used to examine a text from a feminist perspective by exploring the relationship between language use and gender norms. This toolkit includes the use of Transitivity Analysis, which inherently intertwines the two theories to become one sizeable analytic instrument to examine gender stereotyping and sexism in texts.

The broader framework of SFL will be introduced before moving to a more in-depth review of Transitivity Analysis and its uses within feminist theory. A third section will focus on Feminist Stylistics and current research done with Mills' framework. Finally, a short section on Roald Dahl will provide an insight into his life and how he has been perceived by society in recent times.

2.1. Systemic Functional Linguistics

Every speaker does something with language – be it altering it, shaping it, or, to put it simply: just using it. Ultimately, it is used for a precise purpose, to fulfil a specific function. This is where the functionality aspect of language comes to play in Systemic Functional Linguistics. Each person will use language differently, yet there is a meaning-construing system behind all of this, which will be illustrated in the following chapter.

As a social semiotic linguist, M. A. K. Halliday mainly researched the area of how meaning is created and how it can be used to communicate a text. This led to the 1960s establishment of SFL as a framework that aids in disclosing the meaning-making processes within language use. It was achieved by considering not the formal structures of language, as most other linguists did at the time, but rather by relying on the surrounding social context for clarification. As the name suggests, Systemic Functional Linguistics makes the presumption that language serves to accomplish explicit functions. As Eggins (2044: 3) puts it, “people negotiate texts in order to make meanings with each other”, which indicates that the primary purpose (or function) of language is to convey a message with a distinct meaning. This leads to the conclusion that the most basic function of language is a semantic one that is set out to make meaning. To fully understand how people communicate these messages, one must look at the different levels at which meaning can be construed.

Halliday disclosed three stages of meaning-making, which all operate in parallel. These three lines of meaning are called Metafunctions in systemic theory. Although all three Metafunctions serve to express different sets of lexicogrammatical choices, eventually, they will all be fused and mapped onto a clause. According to Halliday and Hasan (1989: 44), Metafunctions are “that part of a system of a language – the particular semantic and lexicogrammatical resources – that has evolved to perform the function in question”, or the functionalities that have become inherent to language use. The Metafunctions can be divided into the Ideational (subdivided into Experiential and Logical), Interpersonal and Textual Metafunctions, and together they comprise the total meaning potential of a clause. Another distinct feature of the Metafunctions is their universality across all languages. Individuals will “construe experience, enact social relationships, and create discourse” (Thompson et al.

2019: 37) no matter the language. To demonstrate how meaning is made according to SFL theory, I will be using an example sentence to map out the individual Metafunctions visually. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to briefly explain the Metafunctions and what sort of meaning they convey.

Metafunction (technical name)	Definition (kind of meaning)
Experiential	construing a model of experience
Logical	constructing logical relations
Interpersonal	enacting social relationships
Textual	creating relevance to context

Table 1 Metafunctions and their corresponding meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 85)

Firstly, the Ideational Metafunction enables the speaker to produce the representational content of a topic. As we are all unique individuals, we also experience the world in different ways – and as humans, we also want to convey our own interpretations of the world around us. This Metafunction is unlike the other two in that it can be subdivided into two subordinated dimensions of meaning-making called the Experiential Metafunction and the Logical Metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 361f.; some scholars, however, completely separate these two from each other creating not three, but four Metafunctions, e.g. Hasan 2013). As the name suggests, the experiential construes meaning through a model of experience whilst the logical constructs logical relations within a clause complex. It is crucial to know the following information to understand the example sentence:

- experiential meaning is conveyed through the Transitivity System, which considers the Processes (verbal groups), Participants (nominal groups), and circumstances (adverbial groups/prepositional phrases) of the clause (Egins 2004: 214f.)
- logical meaning is expressed via Taxis and Logico-semantics, which deals with how clauses can be linked together to make sense (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 316f.)

Having said this, the paper on hand will exclusively focus on the experiential domain (see chapter 2.2.). Due to length limitations, I have opted to omit further attention to the Logical Metafunction.

Secondly, the Interpersonal Metafunction is concerned with personal relationships between the people that are creating meaning. It is common knowledge that conversations with a sibling will be inherently different from dialogues with your superior at work. Conversations about birthday presents will be more enjoyable than those about ailments. Therefore, the interpersonal enables to enact social relationships which will naturally create meaning for itself (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 85). Eggins (2004: 12) clarifies that every message we generate expresses connections: “whatever use we put language to we are always expressing an attitude and taking up a role”. The meaning-making process happens with the system of Mood, which is more comprehensively described in Eggins 2004: 141ff. and Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 134ff.

Finally, the Textual Metafunction facilitates connecting what is being said to what has been disclosed before, what is bound to come later and to the overall situational context (Eggins 2004: 12). For language to make sense in the bigger picture, we have to structure and organise text so the person receiving the information can process it successfully. This is accomplished by applying the system of Theme or “the point of departure (what I’m talking about)” and Rheme or “the point of arrival (what I’m telling you about it)” (Eggins 2004: 212). Theme and Rheme contribute to cohesive and coherent texts which explicitly highlight specific words in the clause as more critical than others.

Now that it is clear that all three Metafunctions exist, I want to demonstrate how “a clause is the complex realisation of options from these three functional-semantic components” (Halliday & Webster 2009: 6).

<i>But</i>	<i>Janice</i>	<i>at school</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>teach</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>for life.</i>
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The experiential meaning of this sentence is primarily given through the choice of Process/verbal group and the inherent Participants/nominal groups. It displays the experience of the person saying this sentence and provides us with information on what the conversation is about. Therefore, the predicate ‘teach’ and the accompanying subject ‘we’, as well as the indirect object ‘you’, transmits information about the sender’s experience to the receiver. The prepositional phrase ‘at school’ adds information to this stratum.

Interpersonal Metafunction can, for example, also be observed through the subject-predicate pair. This is the most salient portion of the clause, and without these components, it would not be grammatically correct. One could also argue that this is the centre of the message – the act of teaching (presumably by ‘we’ the teachers). It is also directed as a fact at one individual with seemingly little chance to contradict the message (a situation that many pupils will have experienced at school). Therefore, this analysis of meaning-making interprets how the speakers relate to each other.

To understand how the clause relates to those parts of the conversation that are not depicted here, one could look at the adjunct ‘but’ from the textual meaning perspective. This word indicates that there was a previous statement which stands in contrast to the one on hand. Additionally, the vocative (the addressed entity, ‘Janice’ in this case) immediately tells the listener(s) who is being addressed and who is supposed to reply to the statement. The early placement of the prepositional phrase ‘at school’ signifies its importance (maybe Janice mentioned that she would rather drop out of school, and the teacher detests this decision).

Nina Nørgaard (2003: 14) provides an apprehensible summary of how Halliday managed to capture the simultaneous meaning-making process within language as a semantic resource:

“In short, the analysis of the Transitivity structures of a text makes clear who is doing what to whom, where, when, why, and with what. The analysis of Mood structures tells us what the speaker uses language to do in relation to other interlocutors. And the analysis of Theme structures throws light on the way information has been organised in the text and reveals the various foci of the speaker.”

With this, the provided example sentence serves as an illustration of how the three Metafunctions construct meaning concurrently, although they each have distinct functional roles (Eggins 2004: 213). In this thesis, the experiential domain is the chosen metafunction for text analysis. The research project explores how Roald Dahl shares his own experiences with gender bias and stereotyping whilst also investigating what his attitude towards these factors is.

In this chapter, it has been explained that SFL focuses on how meaning is established within the clause by implementing the three Metafunctions of language. The chapters that follow move on to consider the Experiential Metafunction in more detail and provide an overview of how Transitivity Analysis can be used in order to examine the depiction of gender in texts.

2.2. Experiential Metafunction

As previously mentioned, the Experiential Metafunction is one of the two means of construing one's experience within the Ideational Metafunction, the other side of this symbolic coin being the logical mode. The Experiential Metafunction lies at the heart of our understanding of how we represent reality. Eggins (2004: 213) explains that by analysing the clause on a semantic experiential level, "we are looking at the grammar of the clause as *representation*" [original emphasis]. This chapter seeks to highlight the key theoretical concepts that constitute experiential meaning-making. The first section will focus on the Transitivity System as a whole, whereas the second part focuses on the classification of six types of Processes that are used for analysis.

2.2.1. Transitivity System

One of the main goals of communication is to disclose some form of content to another entity. This quite blatantly means that we want to convey a message in the form of 'who did what to whom'. Every speaker/writer has numerous realisations at their disposal that they can use to represent the *doer* of an activity, the actual *going-on*, as well as the *done-to*. Systemic Functional Linguistics recognises that these three units are represented as Processes (verbal groups) with associated Participants (nominal groups) and optional circumstances (adverbials/prepositional phrases). Therefore, every person must make specific choices within these systems and choose those words that will convey the intended message. If the receiver of the message adequately interprets the message is, of course, a completely different question which will not be discussed here. The following sample sentence will provide some further information on how these systems can be realised in various ways.

<i>Michael</i>	<i>ate</i>	<i>a cake</i>	<i>this morning.</i>
Participant	Process	Participant	circumstance

The sentence clearly indicated that a person did something to another thing at a specific time. It comes across as a relatively neutral informative sentence, besides the questionable choice

of breakfast food. However, had the verb been exchanged with another word that conveys ‘consumption of food’ the meaning could be inherently altered.

<i>Michael</i>	<i>devoured</i>	<i>a cake</i>	<i>this morning.</i>
Participant	Process	Participant	circumstance

Michael still has cake in the morning, yet the message will be received differently due to the altered wording. Of course, the Participants can also be exchanged with ease. Mary could have devoured a cake this morning. Michael might have devoured a croissant this morning. Therefore, we can express a seemingly infinite number of messages by replacing the individual components.

Nevertheless, Systemic Functional Linguistics has determined that “Processes are the core of the clause from the experiential perspective [as] the clause is primarily about the action” (Thompson 2014: 92) and only the Processes determine which Participants will be involved. Generally, a Process will require at least one Participant, as most clauses require a Subject and a Predicate. Some verbs, called (di-)transitive verbs, require additional objects – or in SFL terms, a second, and sometimes even a third Participant. As indicated previously, circumstances are optional components and are not necessary to the simple clause. Eggins goes so far as to say that the circumstantial system can even be seen as a “minor system” compared to the “major system” of Process Types and Participants (Eggins 2004: 214). It is also necessary here to clarify that in Transitivity Analysis, only the main verb is of importance, and any alterations such as negation (did not eat), modality (could eat) or conjugation (had eaten) can be disregarded.

Having explored the Process/Participant/Circumstance system at a more fundamental level, we are now in a position to explore some more complex aspects of the Transitivity System. What has been defined so far is still too general to analyse texts, as any person who can distinguish a noun phrase from a verb phrase would be able to accomplish this task. There is no doubt that a more precise set of categories has to be applied to the Processes.

2.2.2. Process Types

As discussed above, the type of Process determines which Participants are involved. It is undeniable that a person baking will be labelled differently than a person singing or a person doing a mental activity such as thinking. This differentiation is relatively apparent and merely requires common sense to identify, yet Halliday needed more substantial reasoning to create distinct categories:

“All the categories employed must be clearly ‘there’ in the grammar of the language. They are not set up simply to label differences in meaning. In other words, we do not argue: ‘these two sets of examples differ in meaning; therefore they must be systematically distinct in the grammar.’ They may be; but if there is no lexicogrammatical reflex of the distinction, they are not” (Halliday 1994: xix).

The implication of this is that although the different Process Types may seem relatively intuitive, they still have grammatical proof to confirm their legitimacy. Halliday went on to establish a total of six Process Types, some of them including subtypes. The structure and functions of these will be explained in this section of the paper.

2.2.2.1. Material Processes

1. Simon walked.
2. Henry cut the paper.
3. Emily gave Tim a high-five.

In broad terms, all of the clauses listed above involve some physical activity. In SFL, we call these actions Material Processes, and they involve one entity doing something tangible (Thompson 2014: 95f.; Eggins 2004: 215f.). The *doer* of this Process Type is called the Actor, and every Material Process has one, even if not directly mentioned but only implied. Eggins (2004) consistently offers a way to probe the Process Types by asking a specific question. Therefore, the most straightforward Material Process can be determined by asking ‘What did x do?’. This verification does not, however, work with verbs that take objects. As explained earlier, some verbs only need a Subject (intransitive – clause 1), whereas some verbs need a Participant to do the action (transitive – clause 2) or may even need a third entity as well

(ditransitive – clause 3). These would have to be probed by asking ‘What did x do to y?’ or subsequently ‘What did x do to y to z?’.

It has already been noted that every Material Process has an Actor, though it has now also been mentioned that more Participants can be involved. When looking at clause 2, *the paper* is on the receiving end of the action and therefore is called the Goal. In traditional grammar, one is most likely to call this noun phrase the Direct Object. Halliday identified a further Participant that can act in place of the Goal called a Scope. A further name for this Participant Type is given by Eggins (2004: 2018), who has called this the Range. Although much of the information is taken from Eggins, I have opted to use Halliday’s original term Scope for this paper. These Participants are substantially less frequent as they require a close relationship between the Process and the Participant. Eggins (2004: 218) exemplifies this with the following two sentences:

- They did the transfusion.
- They transfused the blood.

She explains that “it makes no sense to ask ‘What did they do to the transfusion?’” as the answer would be unnecessary, just as ‘What did they transfuse?’ would only produce a redundant answer since blood is one of the only things that should be transfused. Therefore, instead of labelling these Participants as prototypical Goals, Halliday identifies these less independent Participants as Scopes (see Eggins 2004: 218 ff. and Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 239 ff. for more detail on Scope/Range).

It is yet to be mentioned how we call the third Participant, that can be involved in the Material Process Type. In the example clause 3, Emily gave someone a high-five. Obviously, Emily is the Actor here, and the high-five serves as the Goal of the action – but what about Tim? He benefits from the Material Process and can be defined as the Recipient. A further Participant Type, the Client, identifies for whom the Material Process is done (e.g. *He made a cake for her*). Both the Recipient and the Client benefit from the Goal/Scope of the Material process, which is why they can be referred to as Beneficiaries.

Finally, it is essential to distinguish between Material Action intention, and Material Action supervision Processes. As the former suggests, a Material Action intention Process is done

purposefully by the Actor. In the supervention type, it happens without the Actors conscious decision. This is important, as there is a substantial difference if a Participant intentionally does something, or if the action took place without an objective. When looking at the following sentences, example 1 shows that the Actor intends to do something. Example 2 does not indicate this level of purpose, or at least one would hope the injury was not intentional. Intention and supervention will play an important role in determining various female characters' involvement in the analysis part of the paper.

1. He broke the window to get inside his house.
2. He broke his leg skiing.

To conclude the Material Process, the literature identifies five Participants that are inherent to it. This includes the mandatory Actor that functions as the Subject of a clause. Additionally, any transitive or ditransitive verb phrases need supplementary Participants that can either be the Goal or Scope for the Direct Object and can also be a Recipient or Client in the Indirect Object position.

2.2.2.2. Mental Processes

1. I know that the end is near.
2. You fear the darkness.
3. Gerald heard the siren.

When considering these clauses, it becomes apparent that not every Process can denote a palpable physical action. Rather often, people merely want to express how they are feeling or what they perceive at a given moment. Therefore, Halliday defined a category that would include Processes of sensing rather than actively doing – called the Mental Process (Berry 2019: 99). As Thompson (2014: 97) adequately indicates, it appears unsatisfactory to label the Participants in Mental Processes Actor and Goal, as the Participant is not really acting in its true sense, nor is the action directed at anything. A Mental Process demands an animate Participant in whose mind the Process can take place, termed the Senser. This is one of the five defining features of Mental Processes that Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 248 ff.) identified. As previously disclosed, semantic differences alone do not suffice in differentiating

between the Process Types, which is why he also drew on grammatical explanations. A second linguistic feature that must be fulfilled is the involvement of two Participants, as there are no instances of intransitive Mental Processes. This second Participant is labelled Phenomenon and is far less restricted in its nature than the Senser. Indeed, it “may even be a ‘fact’: that is, a clause treated as if it were almost a thing” (Thomson 2014: 98), as can be seen in example 1.

One area in which there seem to be varying opinions is in the subtypes of Mental Processes. Eggins explains that “Halliday divides Mental Process verbs into three classes” (2004: 225), namely cognitive (e.g. *know*), affective (e.g. *like*), and perceptive (e.g. *hear*). However, she fails to mention from where exactly this information is taken. Thompson (2014: 99), on the other hand, presents four subcategories: perceptive and cognitive, conforming with Eggins, but he also mentions emotive and desiderative Mental Processes. Emotive refers to any Process of feeling, whereas desiderative indicates wanting. Interestingly, Thompson does, however, state that “this category was not included in Halliday 1994), which leads me to the conclusion that Eggins used earlier editions of Halliday’s *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. For the analysis in this paper, all four classes will be considered.

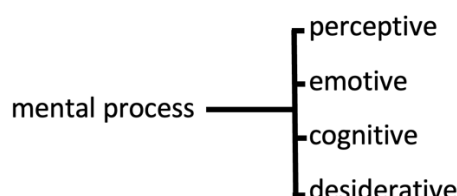


Figure 1 subcategories of Mental Processes (adapted from Berry 2019: 100)

Although more subclassifications of Processes and Participants have now been defined in the Mental category, the definitions provided in this description satisfy the needs of the analysis and discussion section of this paper (see Eggins 2004: 225 ff.; Thompson 2014: 97 ff.; Berry 2019: 99 ff.).

2.2.2.3. Behavioural Processes

1. Laura sniffed the perfume.

2. Leonard sobbed having heard the news.
3. He laughed a high-pitched laugh.

This might be the most interesting yet confusing of all, as it is “the least distinct of all the six Process Types because [it has] no clearly defined characteristics of [its] own” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 301). Semantically, Behavioural Processes lie somewhere in the middle of Material and Mental. They indicate Mental perception by a conscious being whilst also being outward physical signs of physiological and psychological behaviour (Eggins 2004: 233). In simpler terms, Behavioural Processes only concern conscious humans, but the action is not confined to the Participant’s mind.

A quite intriguing factor is that many Behaviourals have corresponding Mental perceptive Processes, e.g. *look*, *listen* (Behavioural) versus *see*, *hear* (Mental). Additionally, verbs that manifest some mental states, such as the Process *laugh* in example clause 3, are included in this class.

For the most part, these clauses only require one (human) Participant who does the behaviour, conveniently labelled Behavior. There can, however, be a second component which only serves to restate the Process, as seen in example 3, in which we only discover that the Behavior is laughing a laugh. This is called the Behaviour. A final distinction can be made here, as ‘the perfume’ in clause 1 is not a restatement but a proper separate entity – in this case, the second Participant can be identified as a Phenomenon, indicating the similarity to Mental Processes once more.

2.2.2.4. Verbal Processes

1. I explained the rules to her.
2. Bob asked, “When is dinner ready?”
3. The packaging said sugar-free.

Verbal Processes include all instances of verbal action which includes all forms of the verb *to say*, as well as “symbolic exchanges of meaning” (Eggins 2004: 235). Symbolic exchanges refer to clauses that do not directly involve a Participant uttering a message but rather indicate

information being transmitted in some form, as in example sentence 3. Of course, the packaging is not really talking in this clause, although it does convey some information to the person reading the words on it.

These Processes are especially prominent in narratives as they allow the author to indicate dialogue happening between the protagonists without having to use direct speech. Also in academic writing, one can observe an abundance of Verbal Processes to introduce what certain scholars have said about a topic (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 303).

Verbal Processes are unique as they usually always incorporate three Participants, the Sayer, the Receiver, and the Verbiage. The Receiver is on the obtaining end of the Process and, therefore, receives the Verbiage that the Sayer is sending out. Although the Sayer does not necessarily have to be a conscious being (as can be seen in example 3), in most cases this Participant is taken by a human or an anthropomorphic being. As Eggins (2004: 235) remarks, “the Verbiage is a nominalised statement of the Verbal Process: a noun expressing some kind of verbal behaviour (e.g. *statement, questions, retort, answer, story, ...*)”. This is, however, not always the case. The Verbiage can also be projecting, which simply means that there has to be a second clause that is being projected by the Verbal Process clause. This is easily demonstrated by looking at example 2, in which there are two interdependent clauses. The first clause includes the Verbal Process *asked* and the Sayer *Bob*. The second clause consists of direct speech, easily distinguishable through the use of quotation marks. This second projected clause can then be of any Process Type. It may also occur that the projected clause is not direct speech but an instance of indirect/reported speech (e.g. *Bob asked her to cook dinner*). Halliday calls the projected clauses of Verbal Processes locutions and adds that both must be analysed individually according to their Processes.

2.2.2.5. *Existential Processes*

1. There was a loud noise outside the house.
2. There is a gnome in the garden.
3. “I will be available should there arise any problems.”

The main idea here is that some entity exists or at least existed at some point in time. They are generally easy to identify as they require the introductory word *there*, although it does not have any experiential meaning, nor does it receive its own label in SFL. Furthermore, there is only a limited number of verbs that can be used in Existential Processes, though some form of *to be* can be identified most frequently.

Only one mandatory Participant is associated with the Existential clause, namely the Existent, which is the item in existence.

2.2.2.6. *Relational Processes*

1. The scone is dry.
2. My favourite city is Warsaw.
3. The doctor has a degree.

Last but not least, Relational Processes convey the act of being in all of its forms. This is a pervasive and complex category, as there are numerous subtypes of Relational Processes, as *being* can be expressed (and interpreted) in so many ways within clauses. Relational Processes, as the name suggests, establish a relationship between two entities. In example clause 1, a relationship is created between the object *scone* and the quality *dry*, whilst the Process *is* merely indicates the existence of the affiliation (Thompson 2014: 101). Example 2 illustrates that one entity is identified in terms of another, which means they are equal in a sense. These two descriptions will be of importance for further classifications.

A distinctive feature to be mentioned at this point is that both terms Process and Participant do not seem appropriate in Relational Processes. *Being* or *having a quality* are not Processes per se, which also implies that they do not have true Participants. Nevertheless, each subtype has distinct labels to refer to these words, which Halliday still labelled Processes and Participants.

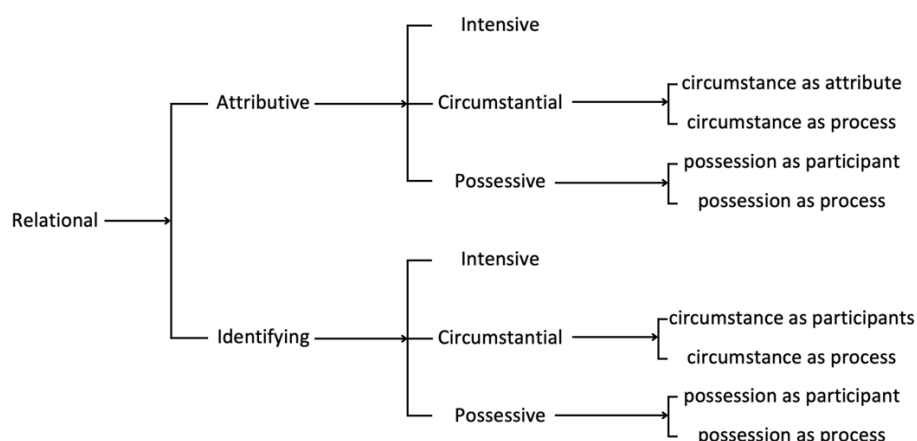


Figure 2 subtypes of Relational Processes (adapted from Eggins 2004: 239)

As previously mentioned, this discussion will start with the distinction between Attributive and Identifying Relational Processes, as this is the most salient differentiation to be made.

Attributive Relational Processes ascribe an attribute to a participating entity in the form of ‘x is an attribute of y’. Therefore, they require a total of two Participants (x & y). One is the Carrier (y) which carries the assigned quality, and the other is the quality, which is ascribed, labelled Attribute (x). When looking at clause 1, we can identify *the scone* as the Carrier and *dry* as the Attribute. Eggins (2004: 240) provides a list of verbs that can be used in connection with attributive Relational Processes, including *become*, *stay*, *appear*, and *seem* (e.g. *The scone seems dry*).

Identifying relational Processes are similar, as there is still a relationship between two Participants in the form of ‘x is the identity of y’. However, “the relation is that of assigning an identity rather than attributing a quality” (Fontaine 2013: 76). Hence, instead of determining a certain quality of something, identifying Relational Processes use the Process to link two terms that denote the same real-world entity. This can be seen in example 2, in which *my favourite city* refers to the same thing as *Warsaw*. However, the specific labels for the Participants have not been mentioned. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as well as Eggins (2004) offer in-depth descriptions of how to identify the Participants involved; however, I believe Thompson (2014: 103) provides the most comprehensible one: “The more general category [...] is called the Value, while the specific embodiment is the Token”. In this case, *my*

favourite city is more general as it could be equated with many different cities; hence it is the Value. *Warsaw* is the specific embodiment; therefore, this is the Token. Additionally, one could replace the Process of the clause with the verb *represent* to distinguish Token from Value, as every Token represents a general Value (*Warsaw represents my favourite city*).

To determine if the clause involves an identifying or an attributive relation Process, one has to invert the sentence. This is possible and acceptable with identifying Relational Processes, whereas it does not work with attributive Relational Processes. *Warsaw is my favourite city* is grammatically and semantically correct, whereas *Dry seems the scone* is not.

As previously indicated, Relational Processes are multifaceted and have numerous subtypes. Although these subtypes will be accounted for in the actual analysis part of this paper, it would go beyond the scope of the theoretical background section to describe all of them. Nevertheless, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 265) display a table which classifies the types of relationships even further into intensive, circumstantial, and possessive. Both Attributive and Identifying Relational Processes can be further analysed as being one of these three subtypes.

	Attributive (x is the attribute of y)	Identifying (x is the identity of y)
intensive (x is y)	Sarah is wise.	Sarah is the leader. The leader is Sarah.
possessive (x has y)	Peter has a piano.	The piano is Peter's. Peter's is the piano.
circumstantial (x is at y)	The fair is on a Tuesday.	Tomorrow is the 10 th . The 10 th is tomorrow.

Table 2 principal categories of Relational Processes (adapted from Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 265)

In this section, it has been explained that Transitivity Analysis is based on identifying six distinctive Process Types and their corresponding Participants. This framework was chosen for the examination of Roald Dahl's children's books, as Transitivity Analysis and SFL in general are known for their reliability and validity in terms of being both quantitative and qualitative.

The chapter that follows moves on to consider a further component, which occurs within more complex clauses than those presented in this theoretical introduction to Transitivity Analysis.

2.2.3. Circumstances

A further aspect of the Experiential Metafunction is the use of Circumstantials (circumstantial adjuncts) to add more information to the Process. Commenting on the purpose of circumstances, Thompson (2014: 114) explains: “circumstances [...] essentially encode the background against which the Process takes place”. This indicates that circumstances can describe the Process or the situation in which it occurs in more detail. It is evident to any language user that we can add information on where, when, how, and why specific actions take place by adding prepositional phrases and, occasionally, adverbial groups.

Halliday identified a total of nine main categories of circumstances which extend to 22 categories when the subtypes are accounted for. Table 3 exhibits all categories, as well as the probe and an example with the circumstance underlined. To rephrase what Thompson (2014: 114f.) says about circumstances, we will not be able to establish enough fixed categories that include every example of circumstance one will encounter. However, by employing the nine main categories and their subtypes as suggested by Halliday, most instances will be covered.

Type	Subtype	Probe	Example
Extent	distance	<i>How far?</i>	He ran <u>three miles</u> .
	direction	<i>How long?</i>	He ran <u>for three days</u> .
	frequency	<i>How frequently?</i>	He ran <u>every day</u> .
Location	place	<i>Where?</i>	He ran <u>in Toronto</u> .
	time	<i>When?</i>	He ran <u>last year</u> .
Manner	means	<i>By what means?</i>	He saved her <u>with a rope</u> .
	quality	<i>How?</i>	She saved him <u>quickly</u> .
	comparison	<i>Like what?</i>	She ran <u>like the wind</u> .
	degree	<i>How much?</i>	She loved Tim <u>more than Bob</u> .
Cause	reason	<i>Why?</i>	She ran <u>because she loved to</u> .
	purpose	<i>For what purpose?</i>	She ran <u>to raise money</u> .
	behalf	<i>On whose behalf?</i>	She ran <u>for her sister</u> .
Contingency	condition	<i>Under what conditions?</i>	<u>In the event of fire</u> leave the building.
	default	<i>Under what negative conditions?</i>	<u>Without an agreement</u> , the plan will fail.

	concession	<i>With what concessions?</i>	<u>Despite her help</u> , the plan failed.
Accompaniment	comitative	<i>Who/with what?</i>	John ran <u>with Jane</u> .
	additive	<i>Who/what else?</i>	John wears socks <u>in addition to sandals</u> .
Role	guise	<i>What as?</i>	She spoke <u>as his mentor</u> .
	product	<i>What into?</i>	He was transformed <u>into a prince</u> .
Matter	matter	<i>What about?</i>	He warned me <u>about the film</u> .
Angle	source	<i>According to whom?</i>	<u>According to him</u> , the class is cancelled.
	viewpoint	<i>From whose viewpoint?</i>	<u>To me</u> , he is an idiot.

Table 3 Types of circumstantial elements (adapted from Fontaine 2013: 80).

Circumstances are not part of the core of the clause, as they can usually be omitted. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 310) additionally clarify that “they occur freely in all types of Process, and with essentially the same significance wherever they occur”. Although some circumstances are more likely seen in combination with certain Process Types, they are still very flexible in their application (e.g. circumstances of Matter will usually appear in combination with Mental and Verbal clauses).

In terms of this research paper, however, there is one major drawback of circumstances. Although the relatively fixed and reliable categories of circumstances would offer an additional means to analyse text in more detail, there “is no principled way of analysing their effect” (Thompson 2014: 117). Alternatively stated, this means that we can relatively swiftly identify and categorise the circumstances; yet the existing research fails to take into consideration the consequences of selecting a specific type of circumstance over another. As the Experiential Metafunction is a framework to identify how a text’s producer views the world, this is crucial information which has not received the attention it deserves in SFL research.

Therefore, this aspect clearly is not relevant for investigating aspects of gender and will be disregarded during analysis for the most part. If explicit circumstances have considerable ramifications for my research questions, they will be covered separately.

2.2.4. Cline of Dynamism

Before moving to a review of previous research, I have to introduce an additional criterion to be used within the qualitative analysis. As previously mentioned, certain Processes are

perceived as being more dynamic than others, making the Participant involved in those Processes seem more active. Ruqaiya Hasan (1989: 45) wrote about this sense of passivity and activity that Processes hold and established a scale of how dynamic/passive a Process is. According to her, it comes down to how much change the Process brings to the surrounding environment. Therefore, a Material Process with an animate Goal (*George hugs Mary*) will cause more change in the environment than a Mental Cognitive (*George thinks about Mary*) one will. We perceive the embrace and the involved Participants as active, compared to the thoughts which happen in George's brain, not affecting the second Participant at all. She calls this the cline of dynamism, of which an updated version can be found in Figure 3. This system of gradation will also be used in the subsequent findings, as well as the final discussion.

DYNAMIC		
1	(Actor + animate Goal)	John took Harry to London.
2	(Actor + inanimate Goal)	John took the books with him.
3	(Sayer + Recipient)	John told Harry...
4	(Sayer + Target/Verbiage)	John praised the system.
5	(Sayer)	John talked.
6	(Senser + Phenomenon)	John/the picture attracted her.
7	(Senser)	John recognised the house.
8	(Actor – Goal)	John went away.
9	(Behaver)	John woke up.
10	<i>(Carrier + Attribute)</i>	<i>The book has a nice ending.</i>
11	(Goal/Target ...)	John took Harry with him.
12	(Range)	I watched the house.
13	(Circumstance/...)	I have a sister.
14	<i>(Existent/Attribute – Carrier)</i>	<i>There remains some doubt.</i>
PASSIVE		

Figure 3 Cline of Dynamism (adapted from Hasan 1989: 46).

Since Hasan originally published the scale of dynamism in 1989 many scholars have worked in the field of Transitivity Analysis. Therefore, some notions around the topic of active and passive Processes have changed or been added. Hence, I have added two more Processes, or rather Participant groupings to this scale (italicised) that were not provided originally but I

deem necessary. Scholars such as Alexanne Don (2003: 26) have also adapted this scale, however, most are too complex for the extent of this research.

This concept is mentioned here to provide a proven framework to determine if a Process can be seen as active or passive, a concept which will be fundamental to answer the research questions.

These chapters have described the first analytical method to be used in the following investigation and has provided general descriptions of how the framework can be used. These analytical categories and procedures are yet to be shown in context. The chapter that follows reviews selected literature related to Transitivity patterns and gender representations.

2.2.5. Review of previous studies employing Transitivity Analysis

The existing literature on Transitivity Analysis is extensive and focuses particularly on the connection to Critical Discourse Analysis in order to interpret the primarily quantitative results of Transitivity Analysis to consequently uncover potential social and cultural ideologies of the author. As will be described in chapter 2.3., the paper at hand will also make use of a Stylistic approach in combination with Transitivity Analysis to determine Roald Dahl's view of the world in regard to gender. The aim of this chapter is to introduce research that has successfully implemented Transitivity Analysis as a means to detect gender inequalities in texts. The former part of the review will deal with more general uses of TA, whilst the latter will go into more detail on identifying gender stereotyping in literature using Transitivity.

Before reviewing more specific research endeavours, an exemplary paper will be presented here, which, in my opinion, should act as a model for anyone using Transitivity Analysis for the first time. Laya Heidari Darani not only explains how modern linguistics emerged to become a tool to analyse literary texts but also highlights how this form of analysis leads to understanding socially constructed meaning that otherwise may remain hidden (2014: 180). The actual analysis itself is kept relatively short, although studying persuasion in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is incredibly interesting. The more remarkable aspect of this journal article is that she explores the effects of Transitivity Analysis from a perspective which I have otherwise not come across. Material Processes are described in a way that anyone would

understand the repercussions in terms of power relations. In summary, Darani's insights into Transitivity Analysis in use should be a starting point for any student wanting to work with this aspect of SFL.

The approach taken by Cunanan (2011) has the consequences of the Experiential Metafunction as a focal point. The corpus of his investigation is Virginia Woolf's *Old Mrs. Grey*, and the purpose is to establish SFL, and Transitivity Analysis in particular, as an adequate way to teach literature in an ESL context. Furthermore, Cunanan presents Transitivity Analysis as a reliable method to understand "the world view of the persona or the writer in a literary work" (2011: 69). A large portion of the journal article is dedicated to describing how TA is used in general and which insights one can gain from the framework, in a similar fashion to Darani (2014). In terms of methodology to analyse *Old Mrs. Grey*, the Process Types within Woolf's story were determined and listed in a table from which conclusions were drawn. Interestingly, the numbers show that Existential Processes outnumber the Material Processes, which is a rare occurrence. He ascribes this to the plot, which mainly deals with the "agonising existence of Mrs. Grey" (Cunanan 2011: 76), who speaks to higher powers to relieve her of her suffering. What is more, Cunanan insists Mrs. Grey's miserable story is a "reflection of Woolf's world view" (2011: 75) due to Woolf tragically drowning herself at age 59. This paper is a valuable example of how to interpret the Processes, Participants and Circumstances of a story in order to understand the author's view of the world. Hence, Cunanan's insight will offer guidance in terms of relating the story world to the writer's views and opinions of reality.

Before proceeding to examine gender related research, it seems necessary to introduce a final research article which provides fundamental information on how Transitivity Analysis can be applied and how to interpret the quantitative results in a qualitative manner. This framework has often been used to identify characters within literature and how they stand in relation to each other. Nurhayati (2018) set out to investigate the characterisation of two female protagonists in a short story by Tillie Olsen called "I Stand Here Ironing". Although the methodology itself is relatively straightforward, by drawing on the Process Types of Transitivity Analysis, Nurhayati has been able to show what effects these Processes have on how the reader identifies the characters. It may seem self-evident to scholars and academics

which implications Material versus relational Processes transmit, yet Nurhayati discusses these seemingly obvious deductions in laypersons' terms. They specifically chose to analyse two female characters, the mother (40 clauses) and Emily (47 clauses), to demonstrate the consequences of Material, Mental, and Relational Processes. The results section of the paper explains that Material Processes are mainly used to indicate how active a character is and how much control they have over their own and others' lives. Mental Processes on the other hand "depicts [a character's] consciousness about the world [they] experience" (Nurhayati 2018: 6). This implies that the reader will sense what the character is thinking; yet they will also realise that the character is not executing that thought through a Material Process which would make the protagonist seem more involved and active. Finally, Nurhayati identifies Relational Processes as the fundamental Process Type for characterising as it serves to establish an identity by giving the protagonist certain attributes. The insights gained from this study will be of assistance to the results section of the present study, as well as future research done in this area of interest.

Moving on, it has to be mentioned that a great number of authors have already considered gender imbalance to be prominent in texts (e.g. Alcantud-Díaz 2012; Chukwuekpezie 2019; Emi, Nicke & Iva 2017; Ghani & Ouerred 2020). Although the overwhelming majority of research presented in the following pages is based on the Transitivity Analysis of literary work, it must be said that this is not the only corpus used in this field of SFL. Other text types such as newspaper articles, textbooks for students and online forums also generate engaging results. Nevertheless, the area of research for this thesis are children's books with fictional storylines. Hence reviewing earlier work in the field of gender in literary texts will provide fundamental insight into methodology and interpretation of results.

A recent study by Chukwuekpezie (2019) involved a Transitivity Analysis of the 1977 book *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* by Nigerian playwright Ola Rotimi. By focusing only on three of the six Processes (Material, Mental and Relational), Chukwuekpezie tried to reveal how the leading male and female protagonists express their experiences. This was done by simultaneously using Difference Theory, which is often associated with Deborah Tannen, and was constructed to display that man and woman do, in fact, converse differently. Although many scholars (e.g. Montoro 2014) have questioned the relevance of Difference Theory,

Chukwuekpezie adopts the model to determine how marriage affects the characters' experience of the social sphere. A total of 37 excerpts were selected from the book and analysed on behalf of the Processes and Participants. As expected, the male characters of the book partake in far more Material Processes which can also be brought into a connection with their role within the relationship. The females, however, are once again portrayed as inferior beings "constantly [seeking] equality, corroboration, intimacy, understanding, support, and approval" (Chukwuekpezie 2019: 39). The results section of his study was not groundbreaking or surprising; however, there was an aspect not yet mentioned that inherently related to the current paper's objectives. In the data analysis section, Chukwuekpezie mentions Relational Processes and how the analysis of these will be "based on how characters describe themselves, others, and how the narrator describes them". As I am focusing on instances of self-description of female characters, this paper will be of importance in that regard.

Previous studies have explored the relationship between Transitivity and power inequalities in children's stories. A mixed-methods study by Alcantud-Díaz (2012) aimed at identifying semantic and grammatical manifestations of violence in the Grimm brothers' *Cinderella* in order to evoke some linguistic intervention when publishing stories from the past to take gender inequalities into consideration. To demonstrate the imbalanced power relations in the story Alcantud-Díaz (2012: 61) executed a threefold approach, including a corpus-based approach, Transitivity Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis. The investigation of the collocations relating to violence produced striking findings. Many words usually not associated with violence (e.g. *foot/feet*) are used in regard to a cruel act. Additionally, in comparison with the British National Corpus, the frequency of words related to violence was considerably higher than in everyday English. On behalf of Transitivity, she discovered that 201 of the 282 Processes in the story were of the Material Type, with the Agents being the significant Participant in the clauses (2012: 68). Furthermore, the characters embodying the Agents and carrying out the Material Processes were typically the two stepsisters and/or the stepmother. Cinderella, on the other hand, was often the Goal of these Processes, especially in those scenarios where violence was detectible. Hereby Alcantud-Díaz emphasises the importance of critically investigating how violence and power relations form characters and can, in that, shape children's view of the world. By employing a mixed-methods approach,

she also managed to analyse the texts from many perspectives, including not only quantitative but also qualitative data, comparable to what is done in the paper at hand. Though the results did not explicitly mention power inequalities ascribed to gender, they offered adequate deductions to be made in that direction.

A large and growing body of literature has resulted in more gender awareness within texts. Emi, Nicke, and Iva decided to investigate how gender is portrayed in English textbooks in Indonesia, as these materials have a substantial effect on teaching and learning (2017: 206). Besides offering a clear definition of gender roles and how they are established through society, they present the current gender issues observed in current textbooks. They analysed a total of 22 reading passages taken from two Indonesian textbooks for Junior High School students (Emi, Nicke & Iva 2017: 210) in order to identify inequalities and propose suggestions on how to evolve teaching material to reduce these uneven notions of gender. The findings show that all six types of Processes are depicted, respectively, in varying amounts and in uneven distribution between men and women. Their resulting reasoning for this data is the predestined gender notions people have, which inevitably includes schoolbook authors. Men act more often, and they perform what they call masculine activities, which demand a “higher amount of energy, e.g. go, travel, walk, and climb” (Emi, Nicke & Iva 2017: 212); whereas women are involved in Processes that are less demanding like eating, standing, and waiting. Final suggestions focus mainly on the abolition of traditional gender roles in textbooks as they have a significant influence on the reality-making process of children and teenagers.

Notably, this is the only research I have found to include an analysis of Circumstances in order to determine gender stereotyping. Although the quantitative results may seem promising, the interpretation of the numbers only satisfies to a certain extent. They conclude that a higher number of Circumstances in relation to males automatically indicates sexist notions. This is, however, not adequately justified. Some scenarios simply need more detail to make sense and does not necessarily have anything to do with adding more information on behalf of the men’s power relations.

The analysis of Process and Participants in this paper are well executed and provides vital insights into the interpretation of results according to gender roles and gender asymmetry. Although the analysis of Circumstances will not be of significance to the paper at hand, Emi,

Nicke, and Iva offer a number of valuable propositions relating to an area of TA that has rarely been researched.

One of the most cited studies is that of Bárbara Cristina Gallardo (2006), in which she investigates Bernhard Shaw's 1913 play *Pygmalion*. She bases the whole research on Deborah Cameron's (1995) idea that the play is not only based on social class but also on gender roles, and reviews this statement by performing Transitivity Analysis on three dialogues from acts II, IV, and V. Together with aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis the aim is to disclose if women are represented as "both powerless and dependent from men" (Gallardo 2006: 738) or if there are alternative depictions of females in early 20th century writing. Although looking at the individual Process Types and their frequency in relation to both Eliza and Higgins, Gallardo offers what may be the most comprehensive qualitative conclusion drawn from the quantitative results.

The most prominent finding to emerge from the analysis is that the male characters, especially Higgins, are the Actors of the majority of Material Processes. Eliza also performs Material actions; however, she does so to be appreciated by the professor rather than doing them on her own accord. This is consistent with the results from Darani's (2014) investigation cited above, in which she describes characters in *Animal Farm* who are only ascribed the role of Actor because they were persuaded to do something by another character from a higher social status. Though, the fascinating inference that Gallardo makes here is that the woman is not incapable of doing things on her own – compared to similar studies of literature which have shown that the female characters lack the capacity to produce Material Processes due to various circumstances. This can be seen later in the play when Relational Processes change Eliza's perception of herself and the world around her, and she starts acting independently. Subsequently, it can be seen that women can be portrayed as both passive and active in the same text and that the "representation as a whole" (Gallardo 2006: 761) should be considered when drawing conclusions about gender roles and inequalities. This final message is of great importance for not only my own research endeavour but any examination which sets out to uncover forms of bias.

These research findings reported here consistently point towards the efficacy of Transitivity Analysis on relation to the identification of gender inequality texts, and more specifically in

literature. However, such studies remain narrow focus dealing only with books written for a more mature audience which may pick up the sexist notions whilst reading. Adults should have the experience to recognise these imbalances and reflect on them, whereas children often lack the understanding of societal injustices. Relatively little research has been carried out on how gender is represented in children's books, and even less on Transitivity Analysis to analyse this issue. My examination will tackle the knowledge gap in this area of research by investigating three well-known books by Roald Dahl. In the large section that follows, it will be argued that Transitivity Analysis alone will not suffice to answer the posed research questions and hypotheses. Therefore, a second framework has to be drawn on: Feminist Stylistics.

2.3. Feminist Stylistics

Feminist Stylistics, as the name implies, has its roots in the teachings of Stylistics. In simple words, one could suggest that Stylistics is 'the overall study of style'. However, this is not yet a meaningful definition, nor does it clarify the scope of application. Without going into much detail on this overarching branch of linguistics, the following description by Katie Wales (2011: 400) should provide a sufficient overview of Stylistics:

“The goal of most stylistic studies is to show how a text ‘works’: but not simply to describe the FORMAL features of texts for their own sake, but in order to show their FUNCTIONAL significance for the INTERPRETATION of the text; or in order to relate literary effects or themes to linguistic ‘triggers’ where these are felt to be relevant” [original emphasis].

Overall, it can be said that Stylistics focuses on identifying linguistic features and consequently provides objective and quantifiable data that can be used to analyse and describe the general meaning of the text.

Stylistics has often been seen to be relevant only when analysing literary texts due to its emergence after scholars deemed literary studies to be insufficiently precise and subjected to significant bias on behalf of the researcher (Ufot 2012: 2460). Despite these origins in literary studies, the interpretation on various linguistic levels, including lexis, semantics and discourse, allows academics to use this framework to examine any form of text, whether it be of literary nature or not.

The feministic approach to Stylistics is most closely associated with Sara Mills and her central work *Feminist Stylistics* (1995), which also coined the name for this investigative framework. While Feminist Criticism of texts had been established for a long time before Mills' 1995 system, the guidelines provided by Mills helped to shape what we know as modern Feminist Stylistics. Feminist Stylistics aims at producing scientific data from the linguistic features used within text to make sense of underlying ideologies that relate to feminism and gender in a broader sense. Simply analysing an author's linguistic choices can often give immediate insights into their beliefs. Using a toolkit such as that of Sara Mills also facilitates more complex investigations into potential bias on the part of the author. Holmes (1997: 195) effectively conveys the importance of such studies by saying that “[l]inguistic behaviour

expresses complex social meanings. Through language we assert or cede control, we indicate the different social groups with which we identify, the social roles we embrace, and the sometimes conflicting values we espouse.”

It is essential to point out anew that Mills did not intend this framework to be used on literary texts only (as the paper at hand does) but that Stylistics, in general, should become a tool for any form of text. As a result, she promotes the following: “I argue explicitly for stylistics to move away from the analysis of literary texts to an analysis of literature in the context of other forms of writing; for example, advertising, newspaper reports and so on” (Mills 1995: 17).

Most early studies using this subbranch of Stylistics focused on exploring how female experiences are intentionally portrayed in a way which destroys phallogentric stereotypes about women and goes against gender mainstreaming (or malestreaming, as Mills refers to it as). Although the original intent was to highlight female consciousness through highlighting parallels between men’s and women’s texts, Feminist Stylistics has recently been used to illustrate quite the opposite. In current times, the model has been employed to emphasize how women’s equality is not given within a fundamentally patriarchal society. This new trend in Feminist Stylistics has resulted in more significant results than the previous studies using the framework. Additionally, Ufot reports that early feminist stylisticians faced severe hardships finding substantial differences between male-authored texts and female-authored texts (2012: 2462f.). This stems not only from the more difficult task of finding similarities between texts rather than identifying differences but also has to do with the focus of analysis. The emphasis in earlier research was limited to a lexical level rather than expanding the analysis to include the clause/sentence level or even going beyond this and incorporating an investigation in terms of discourse.

As what seems like a reaction to this lack of structure, Mills proposed a loose set of rules which revolve around questions to ask when analysing texts from a Feminist Stylistic perspective. As mentioned earlier, she suggests examining the text on three different levels to identify underlying power relations and hidden ideologies. These include the word, phrase, and discourse levels. At the word level, one could look at address terms such as pronouns, pejoratives or even nicknames. This is the most superficial level of analysis as it does not

necessarily require much interpretation to identify the underlying ideologies. Some questions that should be posed to identify gender and individual lexical items, according to Mills (1995: 201), include the following:

- Are the words which are used gender-specific?
- Are generic nouns used to refer to males?
- How are males and females named in the text? (surname, first name, diminutives, title)
- Do any of the terms used to describe males or females have positive or negative connotations?

For this paper, however, the following range of analysis will be of the highest importance: analysis at the level of the phrase/sentence. This area implies that one will no longer look at the literal meaning of isolated words but interpret meaning in context. It undoubtedly involves more effort in recognising the underlying meaning and will likely involve other frameworks to make sense of the meaning. As Mills puts it, “[...] some archaeological work is needed to excavate the places where ideological knowledge informs meaning” (1995: 128). With this in mind, one has to consider any background knowledge a reader needs to identify sentences that would otherwise have hidden signs of bias.

Similarly imperative for this level of analysis is looking at the history of words and phrases and how they have been shaped by meaning production throughout the past. Besides looking at ready-made phrases and humour in texts, Mills points toward the use of Transitivity Analysis in relation to this level of investigation. Transitivity Analysis has been covered in great detail in chapter 2.2., yet I will now present the advice within Mills’ framework that involves TA: “Analyse the Transitivity choices. Are they predominantly materials action intervention, supervision, material event, mental or relational? Are they different for males and females represented in the text?” (Mills 1995: 201).

Lastly, there is gendered analysis at the discourse level. Although many stylisticians do not consider Discourse Analysis a linguistic phenomenon in its true sense, Mills still considers it highly relevant due to the patterns within discourse that will inevitably determine the lexical choices within a text. More precisely, any belief system or ideology will have an inherent effect on the type of language produced by the author. This can be seen most obviously in the way characters are described within a text, as well as the role that is ascribed to women through notions of gender inequality.

To conclude, it can be said that Sara Mills has provided a framework that has found resonance with scholars all over the world, mainly since more and more wide-scale research is being done to expose hidden ideologies that have been perpetuated throughout time. Literature, according to McFadden, “both reflects culture and shapes it, literary studies can either perpetuate the oppression of women or help eliminate it” (1997:14). Although Feminist Stylistics does not merely focus on literary texts, it indeed constructs the foundation for many studies that focus on identifying harmfully gendered writing. Together with Transitivity Analysis, the analysis on the level of the phrase/sentence of Feminist Stylistics will form the basis for the objective analysis of Roald Dahl’s gender bias in three of his most popular children’s books.

2.3.1. Review of previous studies employing Feminist Stylistics

The past ten years have shown immense interest in research to identify and subsequently dismantle any forms of discrimination. While our society is still facing a tremendous amount of racism, ableism, and sexism, scholars have found new ways of examining these issues and have proposed a plethora of frameworks and guidelines on how to deal with such sensitive issues in research. Feminist Stylistics has also seen a surge in its implementation, whilst comparatively few have emphasised the compatibility of Feminist Stylistics and Transitivity Analysis (e.g., Darweesh & Ghayadh 2018; Kang & Wu 2015; Almnaseer 2018; Shah et al. 2014). This section of the paper provides an overview of a large and growing body of literature which has successfully implemented Mills’ framework to expose gender bias in texts. A great deal of previous research has applied the toolkit to analyse one or two literary texts (e.g., Ufot 2012; Rahimnouri & Ghandehariun 2020; Hussain & Jabeen 2019; Qayyum et al. 2019, Al-Nakeeb & Mufleh 2018). Whilst this is the most common use of Feminist Stylistics and will be reviewed in more detail, the first portion of this review will bring to light the enrichment FS can bring to other forms of discourse.

Using Feminist Stylistics, researchers such as Tyarakanita et al. (2020) have been able to identify sexist behaviours such as gender stereotyping in various text types. Their study in particular examined materials from online learning platforms used in Indonesia with the aim

of identifying instances of stereotyping to educate textbook authors and thereby improve future teaching materials. They analysed the chosen texts on the word level only, suggesting that the phrase and discourse levels do not exist in this text type. Although the inquiry did not detect any substantial evidence for gender stereotyping besides the excessive use of generic nouns ending in -man (e.g., *policeman*, *postman*, ...), they did detect a fascinating feature of Indonesian teaching material. This aspect also ties into their reasoning for finding minimal gender stereotyping: “It is because Indonesian language teaching materials lack social and cultural context” (Tyarakanita et al. 2020: 17), which is needed to convey sexist notions.

Along the same lines, Radzi and Musa (2017) also used Mills’ toolkit to analyse the presence of gender stereotypes and how these are maintained or challenged within the beauty industry. Their data pool consisted of approximately 400 cosmetic product names. This more or less stipulates the analysis on the word level, as product names are neither complete sentences nor phrases or clauses. There is no doubt that especially the advertising industry has been scrutinised for its biased representations of women over the years. The cosmetics industry is one where this can be observed at an alarming rate (Radzi & Musa 2017: 34). The most prominent finding to emerge from this study is that most of the advertising world sells a distorted image of women. These products in particular can bring to light the way women are being told to achieve flawlessness and peak attractiveness to please their male counterparts. Although the in-depth study of this oppression against women in beauty product names is reserved for advertising psychology researchers, such linguistic investigations represent the first step to revealing these issues and encouraging advertisers to change their tactics.

As aforementioned, the existing research on literary texts and written discourse in general is extensive. Asmat Sheikh’s (2017) study, however, made use of the framework to analyse the kid’s cartoon programme *Chhota Bheem* on all three levels. This investigation aimed to determine to which extent societal oppression is projected through television shows. This focus is fascinating as the selected show is directed towards children during the height of the formative stage of brain development (2-8 years old), which in turn means that the messages, even unintentional ones, are deeply ingrained into their memory. According to these data, we can determine that the female characters are vastly outnumbered by the male ones (three

female, six male). Additionally, the lexical analysis exposed how naming is once again used to derogate the girls and women in the show. Sheikh mentions the main character's name as an example. *Beheem* can be translated interpreted as "huge, mighty or gigantic" (Sheikh 2017: 21). Although *Bheem* could previously be used as a unisex name in Indian culture, this show has caused any female with the name to be "humiliated amongst her age fellows as well as by society in general" (2017: 21). Naming is a powerful tool and is used often and effectively due to the need for names – and if the characters are not named, that is also an indicator of how the author/producer felt about that entity. Both the sentential and discourse levels unveiled the overarching theme of the 'helpless female' (2017: 30), which seems to occur with a high frequency. Sheikh's results raise intriguing questions regarding the extent of patriarchal values portrayed in such shows. One of the main questions resulting from this analysis is to what extent cartoons can shape the ideology of the children watching them. Prescribed gender roles may seem harmless in such simple fictional shows for kids, yet they have a significant impact on the development of their reality.

Perhaps one of the best-known studies using Feminist Stylistics in combination with Transitivity Analysis was carried out by Kate Clark – before Sara Mills even published her book in 1995. In her seminal paper entitled *The Linguistics of Blame*, Clark identified language used for representations of women who have experienced sexual violence within the British tabloid newspaper *The Sun*. Besides looking at naming strategies and labelling, she also analysed Transitivity patterns. Clark points out that Transitivity Analysis revolves around 'who does what to whom' and finding entities within the clause that carry the action, or more specifically "I am interested in who is blamed for an attack and how language is used to convey that blame" (1992: 210). By showing evidence in the form of multiple examples of newspaper headings and extracts of articles, she displays that writers for *The Sun* held a highly sexist view of women and even girls who were victims of sexual assault. In most instances, the female victims were portrayed as the ones to blame by deleting the agent, the male perpetrator, from the Process (e.g., "No-sex wife kicked out of bed" (Clark 1992: 217)). Although the research focused mainly on the naming processes, it also revealed how newspapers can manipulate the story in a way to accommodate, and even support, the patriarchal society.

In their case study of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Darweesh and Ghayadh (2018) demonstrate the use of Feminist Stylistics on all three levels of analysis. This was undertaken to determine if any underlying ideology influences the perceived intention of the author. By investigating Atwood's language use on the word level, they found that there are several sexist words within the chosen extracts, such as the excessive use of the generic noun "man" to refer to not only male beings but also the whole humankind. The phrase/sentence analysis revealed many inferences which could impact the reader's final perception of the novel. An intriguing example they mention is the use of jokes and humour (e.g. "*Women used to carry such eggs between their breasts, to incubate them.*") in which one typically uses stereotypical knowledge to achieve a comic effect (2018: 26). More importantly, however, is the examination of Transitivity and its inherent effects. Albeit presenting only three example sentences, Darweesh and Ghayadh demonstrate the general consensus on how females are portrayed in this fictional story. The leading female in the storyline is presented as being influenced by a man and shows behaviours that signify submissiveness. It is widely acknowledged that "[f]iction tries to universalise Transitivity and feminism [...] The male character can control his own circumstances and fate, while the female character is usually passive and helpless" (Darweesh & Ghayadh 2018: 27). The final discourse level revealed sexist remarks concerning the description of characters and the roles they have been assigned. An example used here is the use of fragmentation to depict women using only body parts and not the person as a whole (e.g. "*We are containers; it's only the in-sides of our bodies that are important*"). Fragmentation is often used to enhance the feeling of juxtapositions, in this case the contrast between the mind (*in-sides*) and the body in flesh (*container*).

Through the analysis on all three levels, the researchers highlight the importance of language as a social phenomenon which has immense control over how people perceive people and situations. They, therefore, support the consensus that females were, and still are, not equal within most realms.

A relatively small body of literature deals with all of the investigative levels of Feminist Stylistics, which is why Darweesh and Ghayadh represent a unique approach to using this framework. The following body of research focuses on a single layer of analysis, which subsequently allows an in-depth analysis of those linguistic occurrences.

Ufot's (2012) comprehensive stylistic study seems to be one of the most influential accounts of Feminist Stylistics. He provides reliable information on Mills' framework whilst also illustrating the development of modern Stylistics and the revolution within Feminist Criticism that truly shaped Feminist Stylistics and how the trends have consequently been changing in this field. Besides the extensive theoretical overview, Ufot's main aim is to determine if female writing is indeed stylistically unique or simply a deviation from male writing. Additionally, he sets out to ascertain if female authors intentionally seek to dismantle stereotypes. This is done by analysing two novels regarding concepts of love, marriage, and society: Jane Austen's timeless book *Pride and Prejudice*, and Nigerian author Tanya Hume-Satomi's *The General's Wife*. By drawing on the field of grammar and lexico-semantic features, Ufot concludes that Feminist Stylistics is one of the few frameworks which allow the "exemplification of the relationship between language and power [by] draw[ing] eclectically on insights from literary and linguistic theories" (2012: 2470). The outcomes of the investigation demonstrate that Austin and Hume-Sotomi use lexico-grammatical tropes, which are usually linked to the 'typical male sentence'. Some characteristics of the male sentence are mentioned on page 2464: "men's writing prefers subordination which is exemplified by subordinate clauses and complex sentences". They base this upon Coupland's (2007) findings, that the male sentence "has the effect of hierarchising, suppressing and ordering". In comparison, they distinguish that the female sentence would exhibit parataxis and equality through co-ordination of sentences. The results show that both female authors contribute to the ever-growing body of writers that consciously detest male chauvinism and consequently "underscore the timelessness and continuity of Feminist Stylistic postulations and practice" (Ufot 2012: 2470).

A detailed examination of the level of discourse was recently presented by Qayyum et al. (2019). The object of investigation was Doris Lessing's novel *A Woman on a Roof*, intending to analyse the characterisation of males and females. Drawing on an extensive toolkit including fragmentation, descriptions of body parts and clothing, and objectification, the researchers found concerning results. Unlike Ufot's promising outcomes, Lessing's narrative contains highly negative representations of women, most of them indicating that females are barely more than housewives and sexual objects. In a subsidiary investigation, Qayyum et al.

also observed that women are acted upon, whereas the male characters are the ones carrying out the action. This observation goes beyond the level of discourse yet closely relates to the analysis of the study at hand.

The reviewed articles have not yet extensively explored the relationship between Feminist Stylistics and Transitivity Analysis. However, there is an unambiguous relationship between the two frameworks, which the following papers will exemplify. In Mills' landmark book, *Feminist Stylistics*, she displays the importance of considering Transitivity Analysis when studying the phrase or sentence level (1995: 143ff.). Her comprehensive description of how to make use of Halliday's framework for Stylistic purposes established the grounds for many future scholars to merge the two theories. The following reviews are kept brief yet detailed enough to provide an expansive overview of the interplay between Feminist Stylistics and Transitivity Analysis within recent studies.

In 2018, Almnaseer published a paper which explores the notion of male hegemony in Ernest Hemingway's short story *Cat in the Rain*. By implementing a mixed-methods approach (combining the quantitative results of the Transitivity Analysis and qualitatively interpreting them with the help of Feminist Stylistics), they selected eight extracts from the story, coded and analysed them accordingly. Almnaseer argues that Hemingway intentionally used non-Material Processes concerning the book's female characters to ensure the perception of them being inferior to male characters. A relatively provocative thought is also stated regarding the naming or rather the identification of the female characters. As they are not given a proper name, one could interpret this as Hemingway's hidden message that all women are passive 'characters' in a male-dominated world, not just the entities in the short story.

One well-known study often cited in research on this topic is that of Kang and Wu (2015). Their study offers probably one of the most comprehensive applications of Transitivity Analysis in combination with Feminist Stylistics within David Herbert Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The chosen literary text is almost 100 years old at the time of writing this paper, which is why one has to keep in mind the changes in society. However, many of the findings presented still correlate with the portrayal of women in writing today. They point out that Mills (1995) focuses primarily on three Process Types: the Material, the Mental, and the

Relational. Kang and Wu filtered through the Processes mentioned within scenes of sexual love to identify the role of the heroine Connie as an active Participant. They draw on the extensive range of examples and conclude that Connie lacks Material Processes, which would make her seem in control of her actions, but that she tends to be a passive and obedient partner. Connie represents the Goal of Mellor's Material Processes, which is easily identified as most of these Processes are taken by transitive words that require an object, or Goal in these instances. These findings align with the assumption that D.H. Lawrence had an underlying gender bias. However, Kang and Wu mention that this ideology may not have been hidden at all: "Such ideas of Lawrence's are closely related to his unhappy marriage life, his loss of sexual potency and die-hard traditional idea of male dominance at that time" (Kang & Wu 2015: 1204).

From the studies reviewed here, it is evident that Feminist Stylistics is a valuable framework for analysing language at many different levels. They also provide clear evidence for the usefulness of Feminist Stylistics together with Transitivity Analysis. The paper at hand aims to provide an insight into the use of these two frameworks to identify the way gender is portrayed in stories written for children, as this remains vastly untouched by research. The subsequent chapter will introduce the author of these texts and provide more information on possible reasons for the notorious negatively construed gender roles within his books.

2.4. Roald Dahl

"I must keep reminding you that this is a book for children
and I don't give a bugger what grown-ups think about it."
(Dahl quoted in Sturrock 2010: 559)

There is no doubt that Roald Dahl is still one of the world's most popular authors when it comes to the canon of children's books. Some of the most well-known stories include *The BFG*, *The Twits*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *The Magic Finger*, as well as the three landmark books analysed in the course of this paper: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Matilda*, and *The Witches*. Despite most of these classic stories being written in the 1980s, they are still

present in most households – even those without children. They are also frequently used as class readers and are constantly being adapted into movies starring some of the most famous actors. Young readers can identify with his books protagonists, and studies have shown that children especially enjoy the “exaggeration, effective description, unusual ideas, and extraordinary words” (Maynard & McKnight 2002: 156).

Moreover, he did not only write for children but started his writing career by creating fiction for an adult audience in the 1940s. These titles for the ‘mature’ reader have been scrutinised over the years, with Florence Casulli going as far as to call them “outrageous” and “disturbing” (2015: 4) in nature due to their macabre topics. And although Dahl continuously asserted that his personal life never inspired his writing, his family and his official biographer Donald Sturrock note that “the parallels between the two are intriguing” (2010: 46). These parallels that Sturrock mentions will become one of the main reasons for Dahl becoming a constant target of criticism. His detractors claim that his gruesome experiences and, more importantly, personal ideologies are blatantly illustrated in his literary works. He has been accused of racism, antisemitism, and profound sexism by numerous scholars (see Adhithya et al. 2018: 46, Minneboo 2012: 34, Culley 1991). Jeremy Treglown’s biography of Roald Dahl (1994) has numerous references regarding these accusations. Especially the first chapter titled “*Almost anything you could say about him would be true*” explains which books have been considered troublesome in regard to his opinions on various members of society. As previously mentioned, this paper aims to critically examine if especially the misogynist features can be found in his writing for children.

Having said this about his early writing career, it is essential to note that he only fully committed to children’s literature in the 1960s and remained primarily in this field for the rest of his life. Though, due to significant incidents in his personal life, he did not produce many significant publications until the 1980s. This is then the time in which classics such as *Matilda* and *The Witches* were first distributed. Caré disclosed that “his son was hit by a taxi and left brain damaged, his oldest daughter died of measles at seven, and his first wife Patricia Neal, pregnant, suffered a series of strokes that left her unable to speak or write” (2021: 17). These events shaped his stories in a grim and sardonic way, now regularly referring to horrid circumstances in which children are severely affected. This can be seen in his books, such as

The Witches, in which one can read about the protagonist losing his parents and then turning into a mouse, drastically shortening his life span.

Nevertheless, these tales are fascinating to children mainly due to their flagrancy. “They are extreme, and they are bizarre and preposterous – yet these are the very characteristics that offend adult critics [and] make the books appealing to young readers” (Gouws & Bester 1995 quoted in Maynard & McKnight 2002: 156). Roald Dahl was seemingly fully aware of his controversial opinions and ideas, as can be seen in the opening quote of this chapter 2.4. According to Sturrock (2010: 558), this quote emerged from correspondence between Dahl and his American publisher Stephen Roxburgh. Roxburgh warned Dahl that the public may find his book *The Witches* misogynistic by writing comments such as “a witch is always a woman” and consequently “a real witch is easily the most dangerous of all the living creatures on earth” (Dahl 1983: 4). Nadia Cohen’s biography of Roald Dahl provides a more complete picture of the following quote by adding:

“I am not as frightened of offending women as you are. *This sort of problem arises in all my children’s stories and I ignore it.* I must keep reminding you that this is a book for children and I don’t give a bugger what grownups think about it [personal emphasis]” (2018: 2461).

This is only one of many instances in which Dahl confessed to knowing about the issues that his portrayal of certain parts of the population brought about. Nevertheless, he continued to ignore the suggestions to tone down the imageries completely. Only five years later, he included comments such as: “A bad girl is a far more dangerous creature than a bad boy” (Dahl 1988: 78) in the book *Matilda*.

All of this indicates a need to understand the various representations of gender inequality that exist in Roald Dahl’s books for children. Specifically, there is a need for a reliable and reproducible analysis of these claims with established frameworks. This paper attempts to show how this can be done by conducting mixed-methods research using Transitivity Analysis and Feminist Stylistics.

2.5. Gender in children's books

As just displayed, popularity is not necessarily directly correlated with the quality of writing. Many of the most acclaimed writers of this genre remain the most controversial, especially in terms of gender representation. Roald Dahl might be the most well-known author on the list; however, some books by Dr Seuss, for example, also portray an appalling image of male versus female rebellion and misbehaviour (Casulli 2015: 4) as well as other outrageous opinions on various groups within our society. David Rudd calls out the renowned author Enid Blyton and her series of books on *The Famous Five*, in which she “explores sexism” (1995: 194) and Rudd thereby brings to light the negative implications of prejudice on young readers.

But why are there such heated debates on the representation of gender in stories for children? Although the causal factors leading to this remain widely speculative, I consider the difficulty of defining ‘children’s literature’ to be one of the main culprits. Even Nodelman (2008) and Hunt (2012), both specialists in this specific field, have no explicit definition. The most conclusive interpretation I have been able to identify is that the only thing all of the books have in common is the intended audience. Neither the focalisation nor the medium or the content determines if something is a children’s book or not. Therefore, authors like Roald Dahl could “commonly reuse the plots from his stories for adults in his children’s books” (Caré 2021: 18) which inevitably led to gruesome storylines for his young readership. However, Roald Dahl also knew that he had somewhat of an obligation to show children that “life is not pain-free or easy and that we have to cope with its difficulties” (Casulli 2015: 7) due to his personal hardships. Consequently, it can be said anew that anything can be represented in children’s books, as long as the intended audience is children. Plots can, therefore, include highly stereotypical depictions of people that promote the traditionalism of particular beliefs or contribute to a more egalitarian worldview (Diekman & Murnen 2004: 373).

Before moving on, I must mention research that has been done on gender representation in Roald Dahls books. In the past ten years many scholars have taken Dahl’s writing into consideration when examining stereotyping in children’s books. I believe this increase in research has happened now because the people who used to read Roald Dahl are grown and in the age of researching and publishing in the field of literary criticism. An example for this is

the paper by Adhithya and Latha (2018) in which they examined gender identity in his novels for children. By studying the content of the text on a literal level, they found that most of Dahl's protagonists, especially those who act as heroes, are males. In contrast, they determined that some stories such as *James and the Giant Peach* have typical fairy tale elements in which Dahl depicts female relatives as "malicious women characters [who are] unpleasant, evil women who bully the helpless James" (Adhithya & Latha 2018: 47). Although this paper investigates gender in Dahl's children's books, the two authors mainly examined gender identity – a topic that I will not be covering in this thesis. Gender identity has a lot to do with the characters' personal experiences with gender, often in some disparity with their assigned sex. Despite being an interesting topic to study, it does not correlate with my current research endeavour.

Minneboo (2012) also looked at features which are common for fairy tales and how these qualities were incorporated into Dahl's writing. The main focus of attention was the representation of power in connection to gender. She mentions that "fairy tales are not free from political power relationships because they provide guidelines for morals [sic!], values, gender, and power" (2012: 20). Gender and power are two important aspects for the thesis at hand, which is why Minneboo's concepts helped develop a sense of direction for me. Nevertheless, the methods chosen to analyse these concepts do not align with my analysis, as she merely read the texts and presented her findings in terms of a literature review rather than a qualitative or quantitative analysis. However, the results she gained from this more superficial investigation also show that power relations have a large impact on the overall impression of the books. Oppression of females and misuse of power against them play a role in forming characters. She states, "Matilda is oppressed by her parents and Miss Trunchbull" as well as "Miss Honey by Miss Trunchbull" and "Sophie and the BFG by the other giants" (2012: 37). This supports the idea that Roald Dahl depicts females in positions in which they are inherently oppressed by male, or masculine, main characters.

Although there are many scholars who have investigated the notion of gender in Dahl's writing (see Maynard & McKnight 2009; Caré 2021; Mulders 2016; Quaraishi & Jani 2020; Rudd 2020; Stauri 2020; Tanusy 2018; Tso 2012) none have taken direct speech into consideration. Most of the mentioned research has focussed mainly on a literal analysis of

the text without employing any statistical measures to prove their theories. This is, of course, a valid method of doing research. However, I believe that simply having gender in Dahl's children's books as an overlapping research area is enough to take these studies in to consideration for my examination. I will only be looking at direct speech instances from both a Systemic Functional perspective as well as through Feminist Stylistic glasses. Direct speech has not yet been taken into consideration in Roald Dahl's novels, which is why this paper will attempt to close this gap in research. Furthermore, very little work has been done on the level of Transitivity Analysis, which I believe to be one of the most effective methods to uncover power relations in connection to gender representation. Therefore, these paragraphs offer an explanation why very few scholars investigating gender in Roald Dahl have been mentioned.

Turning back to gender in this type of literature, Beverley Pennell opens her contribution to an edited volume by stating, "children's books reflect the cultural context of their production" (2012: 68). Gender roles and culture go hand in hand, and it is seemingly impossible to write or talk about anything without contextualising it within the cultural sphere. By writing about friendship, morality and other fundamental values, children will learn what society, or their culture looks like. However, if the depicted reality is skewed by an author's biased personal beliefs and opinions of the world, then the readers will interpret those images as the universal truth. Young readers take in and then adapt the portrayed roles in the process of socialisation (Tsao 2020: 16). As a result, it is crucial that authors represent gender in a diverse, or at least contemporary and authentic, manner. This goes for fiction and non-fiction, as even stories that happen in "chocolate factories or academies of wizardry [...] educate children about what is expected and valued in the real world" (Diekman & Murnen 2004: 373).

Nevertheless, Diekman and Murnen also point out that the manifestation of gender stereotyping in children's literature is inevitable, as the authors themselves are influenced by our society which in general terms is still a patriarchal one (2004: 374). These views have, however, made substantial progression in the direction of more equitable views on gender. This advancement can be observed within literature for children as well.

Casey et al. (2021) conducted a wide-scale inspection of reasons for the representation of gender disparity in children's books over the last six decades. They found that male

protagonists still dominate in this type of literature, although great strides have been made recently to balance the distribution. Among a few other factors, such as publication year and intended audience age, author gender seems to be a deciding factor in how gender is represented (Casey et al. 2021: 14f). According to their results, children's books "reflect male authors' own preferences for male fictitious characters" whilst "female authors represented the gender of protagonists more equitably" (Casey et al. 2021: 15). These trends also differ depending on the age of the intended readership, as older children and teenagers have the ability to reflect on the books versus their own beliefs. Commenting on the awareness of different belief systems, Kristen Guest (2008: 246) argues the following: "Developmental research suggests that though many young [children], from the ages five to seven, do not place themselves within normative gender roles, this capacity for resistance erodes by the teenage years". Nonetheless, this lack of knowledge among the youngest readers does not warrant authors of children's books to ignore decency when it comes to gender portrayal.

In summary, it has been shown in this chapter that gender is still a crucial factor to consider when choosing and reading books for children. Many contemporary authors are committed to diversifying gender representation in books, starting even from picture books for non-readers (Adam & Harper 2021: 18). Nevertheless, the persistent misrepresentation can be attributed to the people's choice of books. Despite being forty-odd years old, Roald Dahl's books remain popular and are constantly reprinted in many languages. Times have changed, and our society has experienced several waves of feminism that have opened the door for present-day writers to break free from stereotypes found in older books. Yet it seems like classics such as *Matilda* will not leave the shelves any time soon. Consequently, this underscores the need for more research on where gender bias can be found and how to address this with children.

2.6. Concluding statement

This theoretical background chapter began by describing Systemic Functional Linguistics as an analytical framework to be used on various forms of text. It went on to present Transitivity Analysis and the Process Types as a means of examining activity and passivity in texts.

Feminist Stylistics was then presented as a second theoretical framework which provides researchers with a basis to determine which aspects can be seen as biased within writing. In the final two chapters, I considered Roald Dahl as a writer of children's books and provided a brief overview of his personal life before moving on to illustrate how gender is and has been represented in books for children.

The next chapter describes the procedures and methods used in this investigation. Additionally, I have included short summaries of all three books and a description of the analytical tool used to investigate the data set.

3. Data and methodology

Before exploring the three chosen books in detail, it is essential to disclose the specific methods by which the research and analyses were conducted. The first section provides an overview of the data, including some contextualisation regarding the books setting. What follows is a summary of the books to visualise the overall plot lines and how the female protagonists come into play. The final sections deal with the methods employed, the steps taken for analysis, and the data analysis software used.

3.1. Data set

As aforementioned, the textual data I have chosen to analyse for this thesis derives from three children's books by Roald Dahl. According to a survey done by Worcester News ([13 Sept. 2016](#)), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is his best-selling book, with roughly 20 million copies sold in 58 languages ranging from Welsh to Swahili. *Matilda* ranks fourth on the list, and *The Witches* comes in sixth place out of the top ten listed. These numbers indicate that the three titles chosen are amongst the most well-known of his seventeen children's fiction books, and it does not seem like the sales are decreasing, despite the ongoing controversies mentioned above. In fact, these debates regarding potential outdated views on gender were the reason for me to choose the books for more detailed analysis.

Having done thorough research on gender representation in Dahl's books, I identified paucity in this field of study. No previous research had taken female characters' direct speech into account when examining the portrayal of gender, which opened a knowledge gap I set out to fill. By analysing direct speech voiced by female protagonists, one can deduce Roald Dahl's views on what girls and women talk about and how they express this. Therefore, the data set analysed in chapter 4 involves direct speech instances uttered by female characters of the three chosen books. More precisely, it is the occurrences in which the female protagonists describe themselves or their actions. Thereby one does not only uncover Dahl's assumptions about how and what females talk about, but more specifically, how they talk about

themselves. Hence, the data set will reveal how Dahl imagines females to perceive themselves.

The criteria for the data set may seem very limiting; however, children's books often rely on direct speech and dialogue between the characters to engage the young reader by heightening their imagination. It also establishes a more precise portrait of the character when able to deduce traits from their own speech rather than relying solely on the narrator's descriptions. Dahl embraces this effect of direct speech and encloses more than half of most narratives in quotation marks. As will be shown in this paper's findings and discussion section, more than 2000 female speech instances were identified within the three books – often consisting of multiple clauses and sentences.

Finally, I deem it necessary to contextualise the books by Roald Dahl. As Eggins points out, there will be inevitable "ambiguity of language [when] removed from its context" (2004: 9). Although the text type from which the data set originates has been taken into account, it would be unjust to ignore the time in which Dahl lived and wrote his books.

The latter half of the twentieth century was shaped by second-wave feminism in which traditional Western gender roles were questioned by many (Pennell 2012: 68). Especially in the 1980s, in which *Matilda* and *The Witches* were written and published, women had made serious socio-cultural and political strides, especially in the world of work. The growing public power of women caused severe tensions in the conservative majority of the population. For example, shifting gender roles brought about "anxieties about 'proper' expressions of motherhood" (Guest 2008: 250), which can be observed in Dahl's books. Having been raised in a conservative family, Roald Dahl grew up with traditionalist images of women and the liberal feminism movement which he encountered after the late 1950s. This would have had substantial impact on his beliefs as well. As indicated in the central research questions for this thesis, the aim of this investigation is to assess Dahl's opinions on gender by uncovering (underlying) messages through Transitivity Analysis. Nevertheless, the language use in the context of time will still be considered when discussing the findings.

3.2. Book summaries

The following three subchapters are short summaries of the three chosen books for the unlikely event that the reader of this paper has not heard of Roald Dahl's stories before. It should provide an introduction to the protagonists and an understanding of the position of female characters within the plot. The latter two stories revolve around a few distinct female characters; however, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* portrays more minor female figures and shows a more traditional mentality relating to mid-1960s gender ideals.

3.2.1. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

Charlie Bucket, a destitute young boy, lives in a small wooden cabin together with his parents as well as both sets of grandparents. Charlie passes the internationally acclaimed yet highly secretive chocolate factory run by the candy mogul Willy Wonka on his daily walk to school. Grandpa Joe enjoys telling Charlie stories of the days he worked for Mr Wonka and how spies employed by competitors caused the factory to shut down its business. Although production was taken up again, former employees were not invited back – in fact, nobody has since been seen entering nor leaving the factory. This is until Willy Wonka reveals a competition in which five lucky winners would receive a unique invitation to the factory in the form of a golden ticket hidden inside the wrappers of five Wonka chocolate bars.

As every child in the world commences a wild goose chase in order to obtain one of these tickets, four spoilt children named Augustus Gloop, Violet Beauregarde, Veruca Salt and Mike Teavee manage to get a hold of a ticket through fraudulent methods employed by their wealthy parents. In a twist of fate, Charlie manages to acquire a golden ticket after finding money hidden in the snow outside a small candy shop.

Grandpa Joe decides to accompany Charlie, whereas all the other children have brought both of their parents for the one-of-a-kind tour of the factory. Willy Wonka greets the guests and guides them through the magical factory, in which not regular townsfolk work but relatively small humans from Loompaland called Oompa-Loompas.

All four greedy children misbehave along their journey through the chocolate factory, and bizarre incidents cause their removal from the tour. Overweight Augustus Gloop falls into the

warm chocolaty river when trying to drink from it. Violet Beauregarde turns into a massive blueberry after chewing a three-course meal piece of gum. Veruca Salt gets identified as a bad nut and is thrown down the rubbish chute, whereas Mike Teavee is shrunk to the size of a doll in an attempt to beam through television.

Charlie Bucket is the only child that does not cause any trouble, and Willy Wonka offers him the entire factory as a reward for being so diligent and amiable.

3.2.2. *The Witches*

This story revolves around the boy who remains unnamed throughout. He is orphaned after a tragic car accident which killed his parents, but fortunately, he was able to move in with his grandmother in Norway. As he becomes very close with her, she starts telling him stories about the Norwegian witches and how one can easily recognise them according to striking physical features such as their lack of hair and toes. As the deceased parents' will reveals their wish for the boy to remain in the English school system, the grandmother hesitantly agrees. This is due to the increased cruelty of English witches and the grandmother's fear that they could easily harm the boy. She is especially concerned since the fearsome Grand High Witch, the leader of all witches on earth, resides in England.

As the grandmother is advised to take a short holiday to recover from pneumonia, the two of them travel to a hotel in an English coastal village. Relatively swiftly, the boy finds himself locked in the hotel's meeting room where the annual witches' meeting is taking place. As all witches are child-hating, they constantly try to find new ways to eliminate all children on earth. In this same year, the Grand High Witch introduces a new magic potion, Formula 86, which is designed to turn every person who ingests it into a mouse. By adding this potion to candy and selling them in undercover-witch sweet shops, they intend to reach all children in a very quick time. The Grand High Witch is determined to demonstrate the formula's effectiveness by luring the greedy and especially hoggish Bruno Jenkins into the meeting, poisoning him and revealing the transformation. Unfortunately, the witches eventually smell out the hiding boy since all children smell like dog droppings to them and consequently turn him into a mouse.

Even as mice, the boy and Bruno Jenkins still have full awareness as well as the ability to talk to humans. The boy decides to run to his grandmother, knowing that she will understand

what has happened. They come up with a plan to turn all witches into mice using their own potion by contaminating the food they will be consuming in the hotel later that evening. Unfortunately, his grandmother tells him that he will never revert into a human child again and that mice only live for a few years. However, this does not distress him as he will be able to live about as long as his grandmother and will not have to be without her.

3.2.3. Matilda

Four-year-old Matilda Wormwood is extraordinarily brainy, especially regarding her ability to read books, even those suited for adult readers, and aptitude to solve demanding mathematical problems. Her self-involved parents, however, do not appreciate her intelligence but rather regard her as being troublesome and tend to leave her at home alone all day. Other than her family, Matilda opts to visit the library instead of constantly watching television and gets to meet the friendly librarian and expand her knowledge of books.

Her father, a fraudulent car salesman, earns his money by selling illegally modified vehicles that will essentially break down mere meters after leaving the garage. Being utterly opposed to her father's crooked tactics, Matilda decides to punish him by pulling pranks in the hopes of making him less selfish and rude.

As she turns old enough to attend school, Matilda finally meets an adult that recognises her abilities. Miss Honey is incredibly impressed and tries to convince the malicious headmistress Miss Trunchbull to move Matilda to a higher grade. However, Miss Trunchbull had been in contact with Mr Wormwood and had heard of the troubles Matilda causes at home. The headmistress ignores Miss Honey's request and accuses her of wanting to rid the little girl.

Matilda learns about Miss Trunchbull's abusive behaviour towards young students using excessive punishments such as hammer throwing students out of windows and locking them in a tiny closet lined with nails and glass shards. In a lesson held by the headmistress, Matilda unexpectedly develops the ability of telekinesis and tips a glass of water onto Miss Trunchbull's lap. Matilda reveals her newly found skill to Miss Honey which sparks their close-knit relationship. Her teacher eventually reveals that Miss Trunchbull is her aunt who tortured her throughout her childhood. This leads to one final prank on Miss Trunchbull, which involves Miss Honey's deceased father and causes the headmistress to leave town immediately. In the meantime, the deceitful Wormwood family business had been uncovered by the police. As

Miss Honey brought Matilda home, they saw the Wormwoods frantically packing their belongings to escape the police. Since Matilda does not enjoy her home life, she asks for permission to live with her teacher, to which her self-centred parents promptly agree. The Wormwoods leave town, and Matilda gets to spend her life with the thoughtful Miss Honey.

3.3. Methodology

There are several frameworks available for analysing gender representation in text. In recent years, Transitivity Analysis has emerged as a reliable method to determine if “female characters are constructed as passive/unconscious or active/narcissistic – good or evil” (Guest 2008: 247). This investigation utilises Transitivity Analysis and Feminist Stylistics to gain insights into Roald Dahl’s depiction of gender. Transitivity Analysis is, in its nature, a mixed-methods approach due to the initial extraction of quantitative data and analysing the resulting findings by qualitative means. As Mills has provided a set of questions that relate to Halliday’s model, these will be applied directly to the data resulting from the Transitivity Analysis.

The benefit of Mills’ approach is that the questions can be quickly answered when completed the TA. Mills does not provide a set list of what can be classified as sexist/non-sexist; though this would be convenient, she rather enables the researcher to justify biased remarks through reasonable guidelines. The advantage of Feminist Stylistics is the relative freedom it gives the researcher to consider contemporary gender-related issues rather than having to stick to a set of strict rules.

On the other hand, Transitivity Analysis is usually chosen for its reliability and validity due to the rigorous categorisation of Process Types and Participants. Many academics enjoy pre-set procedures with predetermined classifications, especially as they ensure inter-subjectivity. From the clause analysis, one receives a certain Process Type and inherent Participants. These eventually add up to a quantitative realisation of how often a Process Type occurs. This data is then contextualised and interpreted in a qualitative manner – which is why I deem it a mixed-methods approach within one framework. As determined in the theoretical background chapter of this paper, many scholars have used Transitivity Analysis in combination with Feminist Stylistics and thereby achieved promising results in various fields.

Deirdre Burton (1996: 231) set out a comprehensive three-step guide to performing analysis within the Experiential Metafunction, which I have adopted for this research project. The guidelines for analysis suggest the following:

- 1) *“Isolate the Process per se, and find which Participant (who or what) is ‘doing’ each Process.”*

The books were uploaded to the data analysis software MAXQDA 2022 (Verbi Software 2022), and every direct speech instance by a female character was coded. The clauses that involved self-description or self-depiction were then extracted to facilitate the subsequent steps.

- 2) *“Find what sorts of Process they are, and which Participants are engaged in which type of Process.”*

The relevant clauses were looked at individually and coded again according to the Process Type. The Participants were identified and labelled correspondingly. These results were summarised quantitatively in tables and graphs.

- 3) *“Find who or what is affected by each of these Processes.”*

In step two the segments were coded, especially to find the main actor of the Processes. The third step requires a more detailed classification depending on the additional Participant Types which are also involved besides the person fulfilling the Process. This third lead to my qualitative analysis of the compiled quantitative data. By contextualising the preliminary results and looking at the number of occurrences of each Process Type, one can construe a picture of activity/passivity amongst the Participants. Further steps involved Feminist Stylistics and lay outside of Burton’s three-step guide. This was based on the questions posed by Sara Mills which I have covered in chapter 2.3. Furthermore, the discussion section in chapter 4.4. goes into more detail on the specific information which can be transferred from the quantitative data to the qualitative analysis.

Despite using two established analytical frameworks, some difficulties and limitations arose in their execution. These specific shortcomings will be reviewed in the discussion section of this paper. Nevertheless, the previous section should have provided a positive impression of the methodology employed; hence the upcoming chapters 4 and 5 show promising results.

3.4. Data analysis software

The investigation was run using data analysis software to code the relevant clauses as a whole and the individual Process Types within. The instrument used for these steps was MAXQDA 2022 (Verbi Software 2022). It provides its users with a plethora of tools to organise and code all forms of text in order to conduct qualitative data analysis (the QDA part of their name) or employ a mixed-methods approach. Documents, such as books in PDF format, can be uploaded to the system, which then recognises the text type. The user will then create categories which have to be applied to the text manually. This can take the form of in-text colour codes or additional text boxes. The coded segments can then be interpreted quantitatively into graphs, tables, charts, and word clouds. The software facilitates the organisation of large data sets and assists in creating visual interpretations of the results. The codes used for my data set included all female protagonists, and subsequently, the Process Type tags were applied to the relevant clauses. In the appendix section of this paper, I have added a visual representation of the codes used for analysis. Furthermore, some example segments from MAXQDA have been included.

3.5. Concluding statement

This chapter has reviewed the methods used in this investigation and has provided summaries of the three books by Roald Dahl. Some contextualisation of the books was also necessary to ensure a fair analysis of the data in the chapters that follow. Additionally, it has described the data analysis software MAXQDA which enabled me to conduct this analysis efficiently, despite the large data set. In the next section, I will present the principal findings of the current investigation and review these in accordance with the methodological frameworks presented hitherto.

4. Findings and discussion

This part of the thesis presents the findings which emerged from the data analysis in MAXQDA. As a first step, I will provide an overview of the quantitative results resulting from the Transitivity Analysis using tables and graphs for visualisation purposes. All Process Types and their Subtypes will be introduced in a summary fashion without going into detail on the individual books yet. Subsequently, the findings for each story are provided in separate subchapters. There will be further distinctions between all female characters and their direct speech instances, as well as some representative clauses for each of the Process Types.

What follows is the qualitative discussion of the data in which the guiding questions proposed by Sara Mills (1995: 201) will be answered. Finally, all findings are drawn together, and some general conclusions are made whilst highlighting notable results.

Turning to the more general presentation of quantitative findings, I will provide crucial information on the basic parameters. First and foremost, although similar in length, it must be mentioned that *Matilda* is the book with the most pages (233 pages and 41,521 words), compared to *The Witches* (208 pages and 37,623 words) and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (180 pages and 32,976 words). Due to this, all three books also have disparate numbers of female direct speech occurrences. *Matilda* has the highest frequency of female direct speech, and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* has the least, as shown in Table 4 below.

	<i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i>	<i>The Witches</i>	<i>Matilda</i>
page count	180	208	233
word count	32,976	37,623	41,521
instances of female direct speech	202	898	1223

Table 4 Various frequencies within all three books

The significant decrease of female direct speech in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* can be ascribed to the lesser page numbers and the lack of significant female protagonists. This will

be discussed further in chapter 4.1; however, I deemed it essential to mention this at this point due to the somewhat uneven number of female speech occurrences presented in Table 4. Moreover, both *The Witches* and *Matilda* show a significant amount of female speech, as the main protagonists are either young girls or grown women rather than a young boy, his grandfather, and a middle-aged male chocolatier.

Further information is also required regarding the definition of female direct speech. These instances can easily be detected in Dahl's books, as they are all enclosed by inverted commas. As with all human interactions, each speaker's turn can consist of anything from a simple sound or a singular word to complete sentences and coherent reports. The same goes for written dialogue, which means that some female direct speech occurrences consisted of one word only, whereas some female characters extensively elaborated on specific topics, uttering many consecutive sentences.

This knowledge is essential when considering how many Processes appear within each instance of direct speech. This is where some basic grammatical knowledge comes into play again, as one must know that sentences can consist of several clauses. As previously mentioned, Transitivity Analysis focuses on examining clauses and not necessarily sentences. Therefore, two (or more) Processes can be found within a single sentence, depending on the number of clauses in the sentence. If a subordinate clause adjoins the main clause of a sentence, it means that a second Process could be involved. To visualise this, I will demonstrate an analysis of an exemplary direct speech instance from *The Witches*:

"I am too old to be active any longer. | But when I was younger, | I travelled all over the globe | trying to track down The Grand High Witch. | I never came even close to succeeding." (Dahl 1983: 34)

In this example, there are five clauses (separated by |), although there are only three sentences. Therefore, we can also distinguish five Processes (underlined) and could then go on to determine the Process Type and the corresponding Participants.

The reasoning behind this seemingly lengthy explanation of what a clause/sentence consists of is that 202 female speech instances do not automatically convert to 202 Processes, as every direct speech occurrence can consist of more than one sentence and more than one clause.

For this thesis, I opted to code the entire direct speech sections rather than coding every individual sentence or clause. This would have taken substantially longer without adding significant information for the analysis.

Furthermore, for this thesis, I have only focussed on those direct speech instances in which females describe themselves in some way. This automatically implies that every clause analysed has the personal Pronoun *I* as the Subject of the clause, which then again signifies that *I* is a Participant in all of the Processes. As expected, not every remark made by a female character involves an explicit form of self-description. Therefore, the number of clauses considered for analysis is relatively minimal compared to the overall number of clauses present in all female direct speech instances.

This leads me to the presentation of the total number of clauses, and therefore Processes, that have been disclosed during the coding process and subsequent analysis. Table 5 and Figure 4 show the breakdown of Process Type and frequency of occurrence for each of the three children's books by Roald Dahl.

Process Type	Subtype	<i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i>	total	<i>The Witches</i>	total	<i>Matilda</i>	total
Material	Action	0	14	0	83	0	195
	Supervention						
	Action Intention	14		83		190	
	Event	0		0		5	
Mental	Perceptive	5	37	18	69	35	228
	Cognitive	7		34		132	
	Desiderative	21		14		38	
	Emotive	4		3		23	
Relational	Attributive	6	8	33	36	71	105
	Identifying	2		3		34	
Behavioural	-	3	3	2	2	5	5
Verbal	-	4	4	33	33	67	67
Existential	-	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5 Process Type frequency for each book

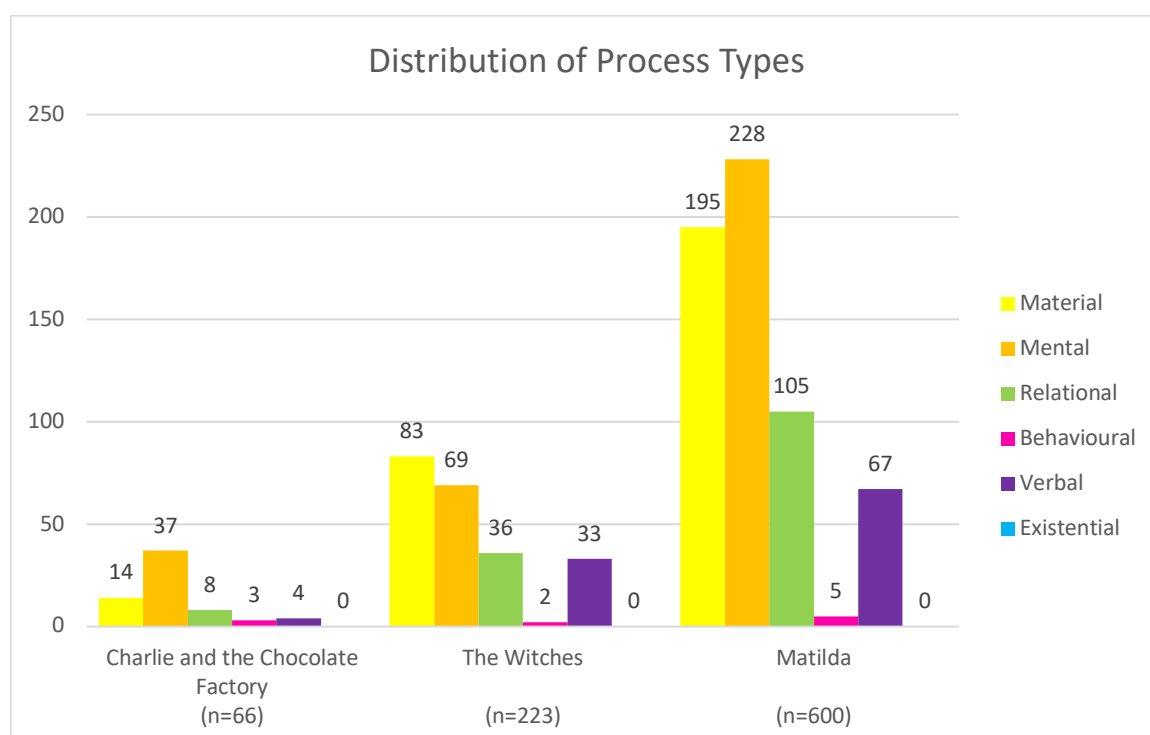


Figure 4 Distribution of Process Types for each book

Looking at the individual bars in Figure 4, it becomes apparent that the number of clauses in which female protagonists describe themselves (n) differs significantly between the three books, as does the distribution of the individual Process Types within each book. What is striking about the figures in this graph is that *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* only produced 66 clauses to be analysed – approximately a tenth of the clauses identified in *Matilda* (n=600).

However, the most interesting aspect of these data presented above is the overall occurrence of the Process Types when conjoining the results. The following pie chart (Figure 5) serves as visualisation and is revealing in several ways. Such pie charts will also be used in the subsequent chapters to visualise the distribution of Process Types. These are especially helpful when it comes to the interpretation of the results to answer the posed research questions. What stands out in Figure 5 is the dominance of Mental and Material Processes, as well as a comparatively high frequency of Relational Processes. The first two tend to be the most frequent in fictional writing (Landa 2017: 55), as Material Processes are needed to describe an action, Mentals describe the world of consciousness. Abstract relations are portrayed through Relational Processes, and I have found that these tend to be prevalent in

direct speech for clarification. Each Process Type also has distinct characteristics relating to activity and passivity, which will contribute to the answer of my research endeavour.

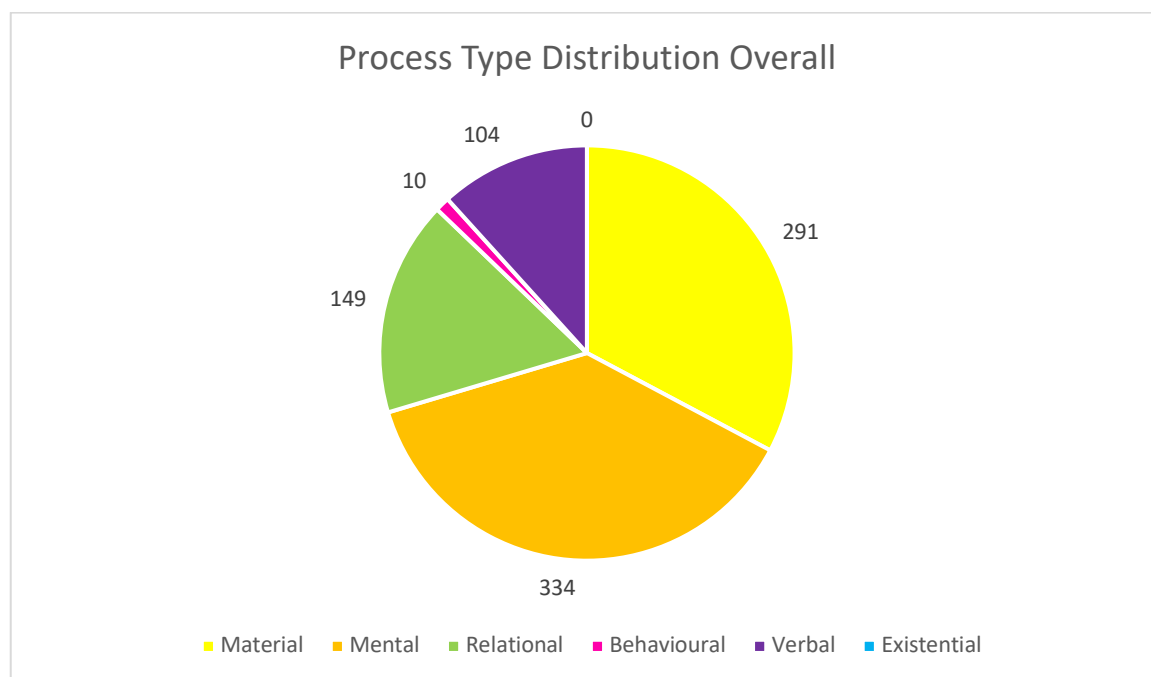


Figure 5 Distribution of Process Types across all three books (n=888)

Together these results provide fundamental insights into the overall distribution of Process Types throughout the corpus used. By identifying and coding all instances of female direct speech in which they provide a description of self, I have quantitatively shown the Processes and Participants chosen by Roald Dahl to depict how female protagonists talk about themselves. The tables and figures so far have given an overview of what will be elaborated on in more detail throughout the following chapters.

4.1. Findings: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Most people know this story by Roald Dahl, and I assume most people will not associate any significant female protagonists with it. This is, of course, true, especially as the three main characters are male, and together they produce far more direct speech than all female characters combined (males n= 693; females n= 202). Not only the omission of essential female characters but also the Processes that are ascribed to them hint at the stance of the writer regarding gender representation.

The initial results presented above already demonstrated that only 66 clauses could be identified in which one of the seven female characters described themselves in direct speech. Compared to the other two children's books chosen, this is a relatively small number. Nevertheless, these findings might further indicate the ideological positioning of Roald Dahl.

Looking at Figure 6¹, it is apparent that the female characters use predominantly Mental Processes when talking about themselves or their involvement in a situation. Some examples of Mental Processes include the following:

- 1) I just adore gum. (Mental cognitive)
- 2) But I don't want a blueberry for a daughter. (Mental desiderative)
- 3) I just knew Augustus would find a Golden Ticket. (Mental cognitive)
- 4) I feel most peculiar! (Mental perceptive)

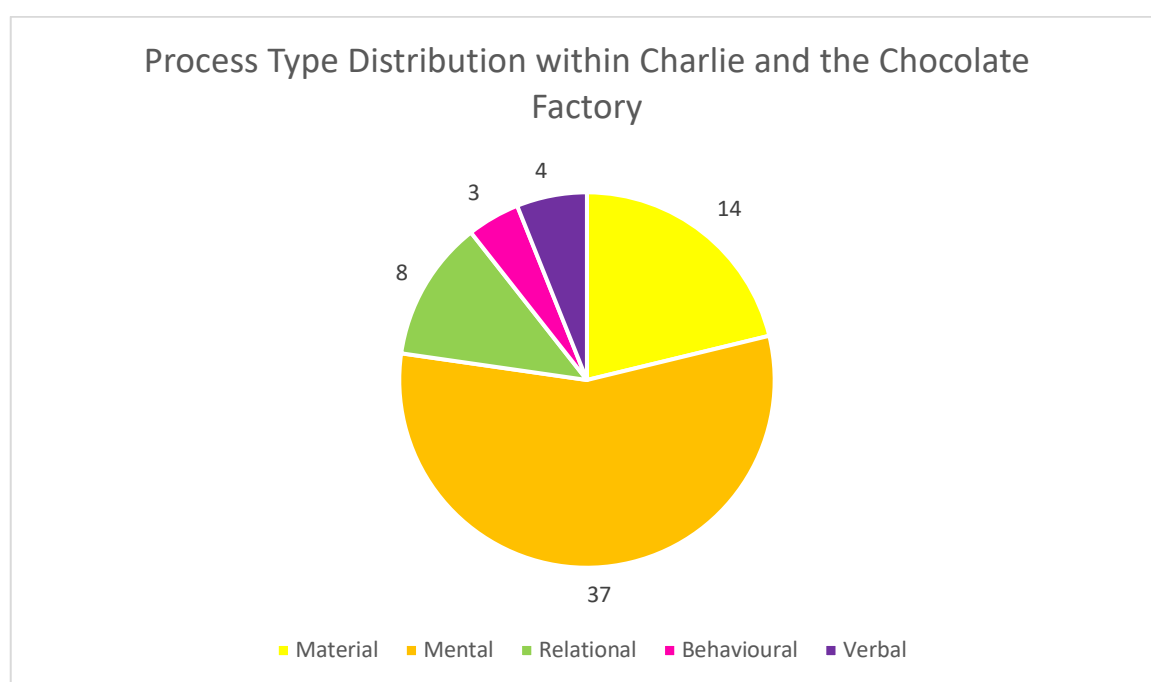


Figure 6 Distribution of Process Types within Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (n= 66)

What is interesting about the data on *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in Table 5 is the high number of desiderative Mental Processes among only 66 clauses. Twenty-one of those include some form of desideration, which indicates wanting something or denotes an

¹ From here on, the Existential Process Type will not be included in figures and charts, as there was no occurrence throughout the coded segments.

expectation. This can be ascribed to Veruca Salt, one of the young female characters in the story who is described as a girl who is spoiled by her parents. All she does is demand items from her wealthy parents by using a form of the verb *want*. It is possible that the distribution of Process Types might have been skewed due to this character. However, these statistics also allude to a more serious issue in the representation of young girls' attitudes.

An aim of the current research is to determine the way females are depicted in these books, especially by examining the notion of passivity ascribed to them. In chapter 2.2.4. I introduced the cline of dynamism by Hasan (1989), in which the Processes, or rather the involved Participants, were ranked according to their dynamic impact. The more change the Process evokes in its surroundings, the more active/dynamic it is. Therefore, Material Processes are seen as more active than Mental Processes, as they have a physical component rather than a perceptual one. Generally, it can be said that the Process Types can be ranked as follows, with 1) being the most active and 6) the least active – and therefore, most passive:

- 1) Material
- 2) Verbal
- 3) Mental
- 4) Behavioural
- 5) Relational
- 6) Existential

Material and Verbal Processes have a profound effect on the surroundings and involved Participants, as something is being physically done or some form of Verbiage is being passed on. Mental Processes do not generally have an immediate consequence on the environment, nor do Relational or Existential Processes, as they represent abstract concepts. Although Behavioural Processes lie somewhere between Mental and Material, Behaviours will rarely bear any implications for the setting in which the Behaver is. To simplify the analysis, I propose that both Material and Verbal Processes and their corresponding Participants can be interpreted as highly active, whereas the other four and their Participants can be subsumed as the passive Processes.

Having said this, it is interesting to compare the cline of dynamism with the results in Table 5. Of the 66 overall clauses, 18 are either Material or Verbal, marking roughly 27% of the Processes as active. The remaining 48 Processes and their Participants (73%) appear to be more passive in nature, as no immediate effect can be seen from them.

These quantitative factors might already provide support for the hypothesis that Roald Dahl portrayed a sexist ideology in his children's books. However, this study utilises a mixed-methods approach to capture the complexities of the description of belief systems. Hence, the discussion in section 4.4. will take Feminist Stylistics into consideration to gain a detailed understanding of gender in literary texts.

4.2. Findings: The Witches

Similarly to the last subchapter, I will be presenting some quantitative results from the Transitivity Analysis for the second book, *The Witches*. First and foremost, the book revolves around a young boy, his grandmother, and an assembly of witches. Due to the intense involvement of female characters, there were substantially more occurrences of female speech in this story. During the preliminary coding process, 898 female speech instances were identified. By applying the additional analytical criteria, the corpus decreased significantly, leaving a total of 223 clauses in which females characterised themselves. Figure 7 is an additional pie chart which visualises the distribution of Process Types in *The Witches*, and it can be seen that there is a difference between this chart and the previous Figure 6.

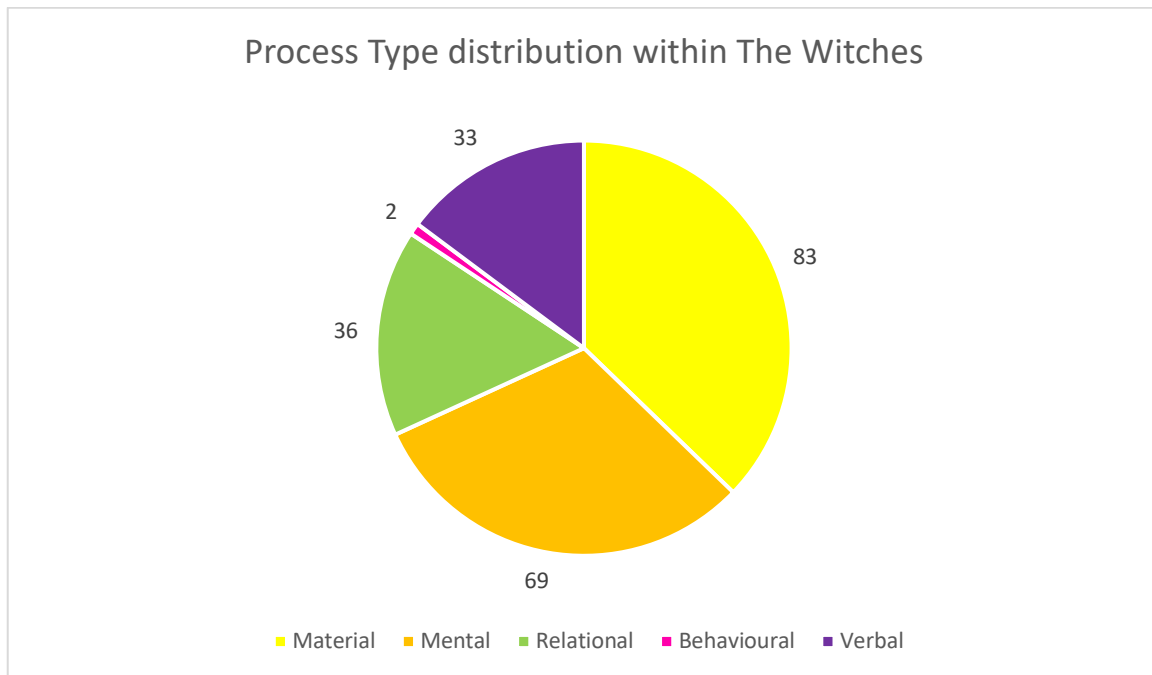


Figure 7 Distribution of Process Types within The Witches (n= 223)

The most striking result to emerge from this data is that the most frequent Process Type uttered by female characters is the Material one. More specifically, all Material Processes were part of the Material Action intention. A further factor that emerged is the significance of Verbal Processes within this story, especially in comparison to the lack of Verbals in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. The grandmother protagonist in the book says the most overall, and when looking at the Verbal Processes and who the Sayer is, 21 can be attributed to her. Some examples include:

- 1) I've promised him we'll go! (Verbal)
- 2) Shall I tell it to you right from the beginning? (Verbal)
- 3) I thank you for all your help, Mrs Spring. (Verbal)

There is also a remarkable increase in Relational Processes, most of them being attributive involving the grandmother as the Carrier of an Attribute – rather than identifying with a Token and a Value. The specific part of language I have chosen to analyse will inevitably involve Relational Processes in which a Participant is given an Attribute or a Value: This is essential as this Process Type gives a more direct insight into the words used by the author to describe women in their direct speech. Although Relationals are not active at all, they do provide

crucial information needed to identify stereotypes of certain aspects of gender and society overall.

Referring back to the cline of dynamism, this dataset shows a different outcome to what has been shown previously. Table 6 incorporates the distribution of Process Types, Hasan's cline, as well as my previous distinction on which Processes I deem active or passive.

Dynamism	Process Type	Subtype	<i>The Witches</i>	total
active	Material	Action Supervention	0	83
		Action Intention	83	
		Event	0	
	Verbal	-	33	33
passive	Mental	Perceptive	18	69
		Cognitive	34	
		Desiderative	14	
		Emotive	3	
	Relational	Attributive	33	36
		Identifying	3	
	Behavioural	-	2	2
	Existential	-	0	0

Table 6 Dynamic overview of Processes in *The Witches*

The results, as shown in Table 6, indicate that there is not a significant difference between the number of active Processes compared to the number of passive Processes. One hundred sixteen of the total 223 clauses depict a dynamic Actor/Sayer (52%), whereas the passive Processes score just below the halfway point at 48% or a total of 107 clauses.

By simply observing this numerical data, one may suggest that *The Witches* can be seen as a more gender-appropriate story compared to the previous one. However, Mills' Feminist

Stylistic framework will provide further information on how to qualitatively interpret these data by taking numerous other factors into account.

4.3. Findings: Matilda

Further analysis showed that *Matilda* has similar results to *The Witches*, in that both Material and Mental Processes appear in similar amounts, compared to *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, in which Mental outweighed the Material ones by far. Although the total number of relevant clauses within *Matilda* exceeds the previous two by far, the overall distribution can be effectively observed in Figure 8.

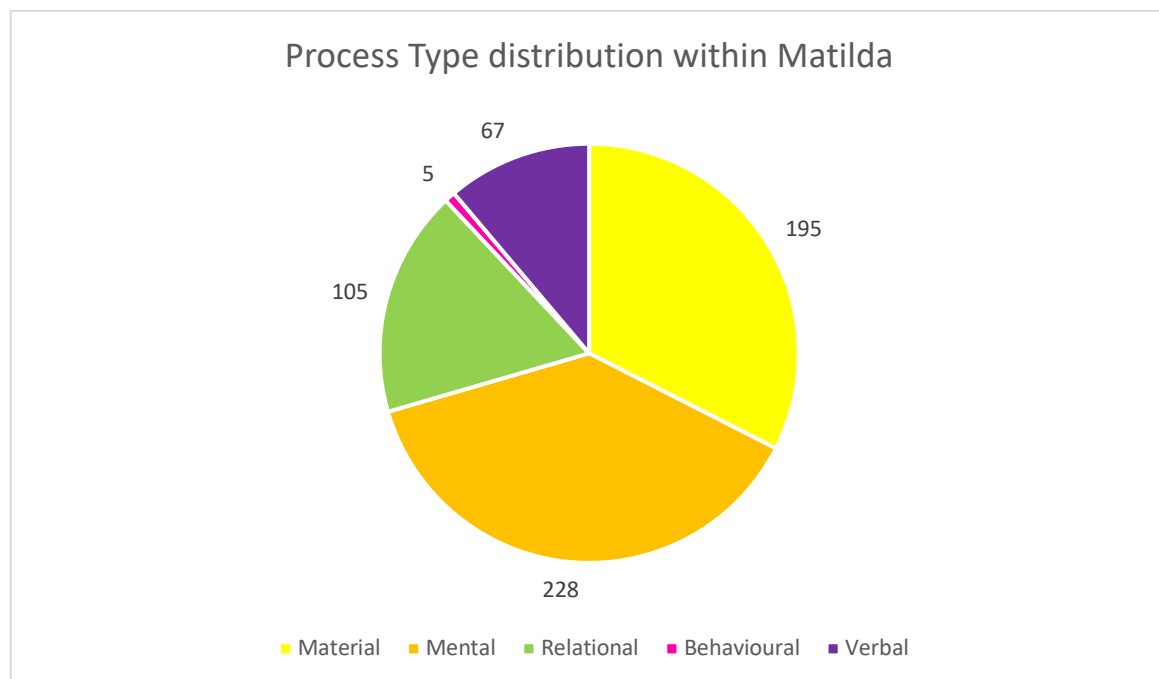


Figure 8 Distribution of Process Types within *Matilda* (n= 600)

This story is, however, different in its occurrence of prominent female protagonists. Most characters that play a significant role in the storyline are girls or women, including the three main characters Matilda, Miss Honey, and Miss Trunchbull. Nevertheless, some of these characters are portrayed as being more masculine in their behaviour and appearance, whilst some are depicted as being stereotypically submissive women. This has been explored extensively by literary scholars such as Kristen Guest (2008) and Marike Mulders (2016) and will therefore only be covered briefly in the qualitative discussion.

An inspection of the data in Figure 8 also reveals a high frequency in Relational Processes. As I have already covered Verbal and Mental examples from the previous books, notable quantitative results regarding the Relational Process Type will be presented here. What is striking within the Relationals is that a large number of them are uttered by Matilda's class teacher Miss Honey. Table 8 below illustrates the breakdown of Relational Processes.

	within <i>Matilda</i>	uttered by Miss Honey
Relational identifying	34	14
Relational attributive	71	42

Table 7 Relational Processes in Matilda

It is apparent from this table that half of the Relational Processes within *Matilda* can be attributed to Miss Honey, a person characterised by the aforementioned submissiveness. This Process Type is also one of the least dynamic ones besides Existential Processes, of which none were identified in this analysis. Therefore, Miss Honey talks about herself by using the most passive of all Processes. The following examples should demonstrate how little impact the Process has on the environment, thereby making the Participant seemingly passive or powerless.

- 1) Only when I was alone. (Relational attributive)
- 2) I don't have the money to do that. (Relational attributive)
- 3) And anyway, I lack the courage. (Relational identifying)

What the frequent use of the Relational Process implies will be discussed later in section 4.4., yet it was necessary to present numbers which expound a character which clearly depicts sexist ideology on behalf of the author.

Having now presented the quantitative data in both tables and figures, I will move on to interpret these results using a qualitative analysis. Sara Mills' Feminist Stylistics offer a set of questions that will guide the discussion as well as structure the following section of the paper.

4.4. Qualitative Findings

Prior studies have noted the importance of feminist-linguistic research to reveal “images of women in literature written by males” because “both individuals and social institutions require analytical access to knowledge about the intricacies of the relationship between linguistic structure and reality” (Burton 1996: 229). Therefore, the aim of this paper is not only to provide the effects linguistic choices have on the reader but also to provide an accessible framework to discover how realities are constructed in literature that can also be used outside the academic realm.

The previous section has focussed on the numerical results from the data analysis using MAXQDA. Turning now to the qualitative interpretation of the results, I will be answering my posed research questions by applying Sara Mills’ feminist Stylistics framework. This is done by answering the following questions with the help of the quantitative data (Mills 1995: 201):

- 1) Analyse the transitivity choices. Are they predominantly material action intention, supervision, material event, mental, or relational?
- 2) Are they different for males and females represented in the text?
- 3) Who acts in the text?
- 4) Are females acted upon more than males or vice versa?

The first question has been done already by coding the text in MAXQDA, taking these coded segments, and evaluating them statistically. However, Mills does not take all Process Types into account and omits Verbal, Behavioural and Existential Processes completely. I believe Verbal and Behavioural Processes should be considered as well, as being a Sayer of a Verbiage says a lot about the power and influence of an individual. Surprisingly Behavioural Processes are also not accounted for, although they have very similar characteristics to Mental and Material ones, which is why I will include them in the discussion. As aforementioned, the Existential type did not occur at all, as it precludes a subject that is an acting participant – which was needed to fulfil the criteria to be a relevant clause for analysis.

Moving on, it is not possible to answer the second question posed by Mills with the data I have analysed. The corpus only includes direct speech instances uttered by females, and the

speech of male characters is not the focus of this thesis. Therefore, I will only compare the way in which the different female characters are being represented.

The third query aligns with the research questions on how the females' dynamism is conveyed in direct speech. By distinguishing "non-dynamic" Processes and Participants from active ones, it is possible to deduce which assumptions Roald Dahl made when developing the characters. For future research, it may be promising to look at the specific Participants and how they relate to each other. However, since only the female protagonists were the object of analysis, this would provide an incomplete result due to the omission of the male characters.

The fourth and final question asks who is being acted upon. Previous research has shown that sexist writers have constructed the plot in a way which makes males the Actors of Material Processes and females the Goals. On the other hand, females do not partake in Material Processes at all but rather take up the role of the Sensor in Mental Processes (see Ghani & Querred 2020, Kimpan 2013, Song 2013). However, this final question is not relevant due to the nature of the selected corpus (male speech was not analysed). Furthermore, a description of self does not necessarily require any acting upon another entity; hence I have chosen to omit the question for this analysis.

Mills' first question sought after an analysis of Transitivity choices within the text. This has been done; hence I will now move on to explain the ramifications that certain Process Types have on the perception of characters in literature. In her description of Transitivity, Mills identifies the importance of Process Types to distinguish between attitudes and world-views. If a person is "actively in control of the environment, making decisions and taking action", there will be "a high number of Material Action intention Processes" (1995: 144f.). However, if a character exhibits behaviour which can be classified as an internalised Mental Process, they "might be expected to appear as very introspective [and] may seem incomplete in some way" (195: 145). Incomplete refers to the notion that the protagonist is not actually doing anything immediately noticeable to society. Nevertheless, we as readers can comprehend that the character is involved in an action, but the impression it leaves us with is that they 'only' thought about an activity rather than executing it. The other Process Types have similar implications. Depending on the position on the cline of dynamism, Processes and their Participants will appear more active or passive to the reader.

For *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, the analysis determined that more than half of the Processes included in females' self-descriptions were Mental. In fact, every female character used at least one Process classified as being passive when referring to themselves, Mental Processes being the most common. It is, of course, essential to acknowledge that the average reader of the book will also get the impression that the female characters are not very dynamic, nor do they have much control over their own actions. Albeit looking at the syntactic choices for this analysis, Mills (1995: 145) emphasises the need also to consider whether the content of the text supports the linguistic analysis. In this instance, the Transitivity Analysis reached a similar conclusion as the text conveys, namely that female characters identify themselves as subordinated in comparison to their male counterparts. To answer Mills' question more specifically, the Transitivity choices made by Roald Dahl to describe females were predominantly Mental. As mentioned by several scholars in the literature review, Mental Processes "[express] the passivity of a woman" (Almnaseer 2018: 442) and this also goes for the female characters in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

If we now turn to *The Witches*, the distribution of Process Types used by female protagonists changes significantly. The Process Type with the highest frequency is Material. According to what has been said so far, one could assume that this means that the females identify as more active by ascribing themselves Material Processes. However, Chukwuekpezie (2019: 37) proposes the notion of unfulfilled actions, meaning those activities that are planned but have not yet been executed. This is done by modifying the verb using a preceding modal verb such as will, shall, could, and their negated counterparts. Although Transitivity Analysis does not usually consider modal verbs or negations but rather focuses on the 'main' verbs only, it is still relevant for a Feminist Stylistic analysis to identify if the actions are indeed fulfilled or not.

- 1) I gave him a roll to eat and that's keeping him busy for a while.
- 2) I **shall** put you both in my handbag.

When looking at the provided examples above, one can say that example 1 has been done, whilst the second example only exhibits a possibility by adding the modal verb *shall*. Due to Transitivity Analysis omitting this modifying information, any clause including a Material Process will be marked as such without considering if the Actor executed the action. I believe

this results in an incomplete outcome for the purpose of this study, which is why a mixed-methods approach is useful to substantiate the results.

Due to this supplementary analysis, it can now be said that although Material Processes outnumber the other Process Types, there are only a few instances in which the Material actions truly took place. I consider this a further indication of Dahl's derogatory image of women, which can be observed in his children's books as well. Besides the linguistic analysis, it is not difficult to identify misogynistic messages either. When it comes to describing who and what a witch is, Dahl (1983: 3f.) describes them as follows:

“REAL WITCHES dress in ordinary clothes and very much look like ordinary women. [...] A witch is always a woman. I do not wish to speak badly about women. Most women are lovely. But the fact remains that all witches *are* women. There is no such thing as a male witch.” [original emphasis]

This description infers that witches, which are always female, harm the people around them by acting powerfully. Therefore, women who act powerful are in return evil and similar to witches. Yet, men who act powerful do not have this connotation, as a witch can never be a man. As mentioned in the chapter on Roald Dahl, his publisher Roxburgh told him that this description might be too harsh. I also previously provided a quote in chapter 2.4. in which Dahl replied to his publisher that he does not care if society thinks that he is misogynistic and that “this sort of problem arises in all my children's stories and I ignore it” (Sturrock 2010: 558).

The third book, *Matilda*, is seen by many as the book in which Dahl puts girls and their power in society in the foreground. However, I believe the representation in this story is a binary one. Either the female is pretty, sweet, but also submissive – or they are a tomboy but have the ability to execute power. Structures of patriarchy are deeply embedded in this book, depicting stereotypical roles of women such as Mrs. Wormwood, who is a housewife and shows no interest in the world of work or academia. She even tells Matilda's teacher, Miss Honey, that “you chose books. I chose looks.” (Dahl 1988: 89), implying that women who are smart are automatically less attractive.

I shall now focus on the Process Types within the book. It can be seen in Figure 8 that there are many Material and Mental clauses used in direct speech instances. Once again, the Mental

outweigh the Material, resulting in a defamatory image of the female characters. However, there are 195 instances of Material Action Processes which have to be considered in the analysis as well. Here I would like to pose the question what the motivation was to perform the Material Processes in *Matilda*. Were the Material actions only a reaction, or were they done autonomously? When looking at the data, especially Matilda's actions happened as a reaction to certain circumstances.

- 1) I borrow them from the library.
- 2) I made the glass tip over.
- 3) I won't go with them.

All of these Material Process examples were uttered by Matilda as a reaction to somebody else's initial action. The first one occurred as Matilda was asked why she could read at only four years old and why she knew so authors such as Hemmingway. The second, as she revealed her telekinetic powers to Miss Honey after she made a glass of water spill over the headmistress whilst she was accusing the kids of wrongdoings. The final example is Matilda refusing to flee to Spain with her horrid parents. These Material Processes were merely reactions; therefore, I would argue that they cannot denote full independence or autonomy. Although they were all done intentionally – they would likely not have occurred without the initiator. Mental Processes often happen as a reaction to something as well; however, as they happen in the mind of the Senser, the observer does not see any difference if a Phenomenon is perceived as a reaction or as independent thought.

There is one female character that wields power. Vidovic and Vidovic (2018) point out that headmistress Trunchbull fits into a typically male role, despite being a woman. However, females can only be powerful "at the expense of their femininity" (2018: 225). They observe that "Miss Trunchbull is ugly, mean, and cruel", whereas Miss Honey is "beautiful, good, and gentle". Miss Trunchbull even upholds the gender dichotomy with comments such as "[a] bad girl is a far more dangerous creature than a bad boy. [...] Nasty dirty things, little girls are". On the one hand, Miss Trunchbull is a female in a position of power, but on the other hand, she is perceived as being mean, ugly, and essentially masculine in behaviour. Hence, many of Trunchbull's Material Processes come from a belief rooted in patriarchal structures.

The second question in Mills' framework was the difference in representation between women and men in the text. As I have not analysed male speech for this research project, I

will be briefly reiterating the depictions of the various females in the texts. Throughout the analysis, there was only one character that did not adhere to the stereotypical gender norms ascribed to females, which was Miss Trunchbull in *Matilda*. As discussed above, there is a distinct separation between being feminine and submissive versus masculine and powerful. As soon as a protagonist delves too much into the world of authority and dominance, they are perceived as evil. In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, all female characters are overpowered and dominated by men. All female protagonists that went to the chocolate factory ended up in misery due to one of Willy Wonka's inventions – a male causing distress to women. *The Witches* are described as being ugly underneath their disguise, accounting for some of their power. However, they do not fulfil any of their Material Process 'plans' that they come up with, as they are all stopped by a singular male mouse (going to show that patriarchal dynamics do not even have to be executed by human entities!).

The findings so far clearly indicate that Roald Dahl adhered to stereotypical gender norms by exhibiting sexist linguistic characteristics. Systemic Functional Linguistics specifically focuses on the syntactic level to uncover underlying or hidden ideologies rather than the obviously detectable ones in the content. By applying Feminist Stylistics as well, both the hidden messages as well as the blatantly obvious ones can be merged to create a comprehensive conclusion.

Returning to the third question posed by Sara Mills ("Who acts in the text?"), I will be referring to the quantitative data from the previous sections once more. The most significant results were, of course, the identification of Process Types overall. The past paragraphs have also taken Material and Mental Processes into account, which is why the focus here will be on who acts in the other four Process Types. Of course, the acting Participant will always be the character talking about themselves. However, the significance of Carriers, Tokens, Behavers, and Sayers has not been discussed in depth.

When looking at the Behavioural Processes in all three books, it is noticeable that there are not many occurrences. The reason for this is that there are not many verbs that can be classified within this category as it is very specific in its nature. Often, it is difficult to distinguish the Behaviourals from Mental or Material Processes, as there are many overlaps – which is why we say Behavioural Processes lie somewhere between the two. What is interesting regarding the cline of dynamism is that Hasan lists Behavioural Processes as less

dynamic than Mental ones, although one could argue it still has a Material notion to it, making it more dynamic. The justification lies in the motivation for a Behavioural, as many of them are done as a natural function of the body, such as *sneeze*, *breathe*, *sleep*, and *dream*. As there is usually no intention to do these things, the Participant doing them is subjected to the action rather than having the choice to do so. Furthermore, Behavioural Processes seem to have a distinct division in the association with gender. Some Processes are mainly used with female characters, whereas others are reserved for their male counterparts. Adopting a similar position, Nhat and Nhu Y (2021: 93) have established that Behavioural Processes are also more likely to be related to female Participants. They claim that many Behavioural Processes “are used for one gender”, therefore, *look* and *kiss* can be discovered when talking about men, whilst *cry* or *laugh* are more likely used with women. In fact, the verb *cry* is one of the Behavioural Processes in Matilda, uttered by Miss Honey – a protagonist who is characterised by immense oppression on behalf of patriarchal structures. This being said, it can be concluded that both men and women partake in Behavioural Processes. However, females are more likely to carry them out, and there are Behavioural Processes which occur in gendered contexts.

Nhat and Nhu Y (2021: 93) observed that Relational Processes do not show any significant results in determining sexist ideology on behalf of an author. Relational Processes are a way to identify something with either an Attribute or a Value. Although there are Processes in this subtype that would cause a change to the environment, such as *turn into*, most do not induce any dynamic change (e.g. *seem*, *appear*, *imply*, *illustrate*). Hence, questioning who acts in this Process Type does not seem fruitful, as there is no Participant doing anything. What can be seen, however, is that females are more likely to be ascribed a Relational Process.

As I have not looked at the distribution of Process Types amongst male protagonists, it is impossible to say if there are more or less Behaviourals in their instances of direct speech. As the frequency of Behavioural Processes within female direct speech is so low overall, I doubt that there would be much of a difference between the two.

Finally, the acting entity in Verbal Processes will be an active one, as they are producing a Verbiage, possibly directed at a Receiver/Target. Once again, Nhat and Nhu Y (2021: 93) have a well-rounded explanation: “the analysis shows a higher frequency of males as both Sayer and Receiver, which contrasts sharply with the common belief that females are more of a talker”. Still, the margins they identified were not substantial enough to make fundamental

judgements on the discriminatory nature of Verbal Processes. In the analysis of the three books by Roald Dahl, I also found that the specific verbs used in the Verbal clauses were relatively 'generic', meaning that they do not necessarily denote male or female behaviour. I would claim that there are gendered Processes in this subtype, such as *croak*, *grunt*, and *wheeze* for men and *scream* or *curse* for women (e.g. "loud masculine grunt" in *Matilda* p.53). The most frequent ones in the children's books were *ask*, *say*, and *tell*, which do not have connotations to any gender. Overall, it can be said that Sayers in Verbal Processes are active, and there are no considerable results pointing towards biased opinions on gender.

What emerges from the results presented is that Transitivity Analysis says a lot about hidden ideologies on behalf of the author. Feminist Stylistics makes it possible to include more openly discussed prejudice in the qualitative analysis. Additionally, Mills' framework provides guiding questions to make use of the quantitative data resulting from the Transitivity Analysis in MAXQDA. Since the main aim of Transitivity Analysis is to expose the choices the producer of the text made, one can compare them to other choices which could have been made instead. Roald Dahl made explicit choices to portray females in Participant roles that make them appear powerless compared to their male counterparts. When analysing instances of direct speech uttered by female protagonists, one is inherently looking at the way a man is talking on behalf of a woman or a girl. The specific clauses chosen for this thesis included self-descriptions by these female characters; hence, Dahl had to write what he thought women would say about themselves and their own actions. The Process Types used in the clauses clearly show a biased opinion of females, as even the more dynamic Processes were subdued by modifying modal verbs, as seen when answering Mill's second question.

In summary, these findings verify that Roald Dahl indisputably exhibits misogynist views through the use of passive and unproductive Process Types for the depiction of female self-portrayal. Furthermore, the contextualisation through Mills' Feminist Stylistic framework answered questions regarding the actors within the Processes and what the consequences of the usage of said Processes are.

5. Conclusion

It is essential to understand the social dynamics that determine society, especially in times where gender, ethnicity, and belief are still negatively impacting large parts of our community. From a very young age, children are exposed to notions about gender and sexual identity by observing their surrounding's behaviours and listening to conversations about the subject matter. Thereby, they are confronted with the linguistic realisations of gender expectations (Eggins 2011: 185), although they do not have the means to interpret them yet. School seems to be the best place to start providing methods to understand and deal with the inner workings of society. Nevertheless, comprehending the real world can be challenging even for adults, which is why an introduction by means of fictional short stories can be beneficial. As literature is a fundamental component of education, many schools and teachers have predetermined class readers that serve to learn about language as well as culture. The choices stretch from contemporary children's books, including current topics and issues, to the classic books by Dr Seuss, Beatrix Potter, and Roald Dahl. However, to reach the full potential of these books, it is essential that the educator has the tools to recognise not only the openly discussed attitudes of the author but also the hidden opinions on various aspects of society.

The aim of the present research was to determine how Roald Dahl depicts female characters in three of his children's books to present a feasible methodology that can identify the author's intention and opinions on gender. This was done by conducting a Transitivity Analysis of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *The Witches*, and *Matilda*. Additionally, a Feminist Stylistic approach was taken to interpret the results from the quantitative analysis. This mixed-methods approach enabled me to systematically uncover Roald Dahl's attitudes regarding gender.

Dahl made explicit choices to portray females as passive members of society by using less dynamic Process Types in the self-descriptions of the protagonists. Language possesses a set of choices which can be made to represent one's beliefs. By continuously using Mental, Relational, and Behavioural Processes in the direct speech instances uttered by female

characters, it has become evident that Dahl had a misogynist perspective. Albeit frequent usage of Material Processes, they were mostly dampened by modal verbs, implying that the Mental processes were not executed but only intended. Whilst female protagonists were given power to execute Verbal Processes, the overwhelming majority of clauses analysed displayed a biased picture through a lack of dynamism.

The results of this research support the idea that children's books should be read more critically, may it be in school or at home. Society is becoming increasingly aware of inequalities represented in the media. Teaching even the youngest readers to understand that the princess does not automatically have to be rescued by a prince but that there can also be an active heroine saving the day will have a positive impact on their socialisation. Although this study was not necessarily intended for an audience of educators, I believe both Transitivity Analysis and Feminist Stylistics are realistic frameworks for the use in classrooms. Hence, future research, including hands-on analysis conducted by pupils, could be done to determine at what age children are able to grasp inequalities in texts.

The findings in this thesis are subject to at least three limitations. Being limited to female direct speech only, this study lacks any insights on how male characters in children's books portray themselves. The study could be repeated by focussing on a single book and comparing the Process Types used within both male and female self-depictions. Considerably more work will also have to be done to incorporate Participants in the analysis. Hasan's cline of dynamism has gradation in dynamism depending on the affected Participant of the Process. It was not in the scope of this paper to assess the Participants, not the Circumstances, although a greater focus on these aspects could produce fascinating findings. The issue of language use in context is also an intriguing one which could be usefully explored in further research. What I mean by this is the lack of consideration regarding the time in which the books were written. It is difficult to say if and how more contemporary authors revised the descriptions of female characters, yet this would be a fruitful area for further work.

Overall, continuous efforts are needed to ensure equal representations of minority groups, gender, sexuality, and beliefs. By taking both Transitivity Analysis and Feminist Stylistics into account, children can be given the tools to identify inequalities which will inevitably lead to future generations with an even more tolerant and accepting attitude.

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7. Appendix

[illegible]

Figure 9 Overview of MAXQDA for Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (Violet Beauregarde)

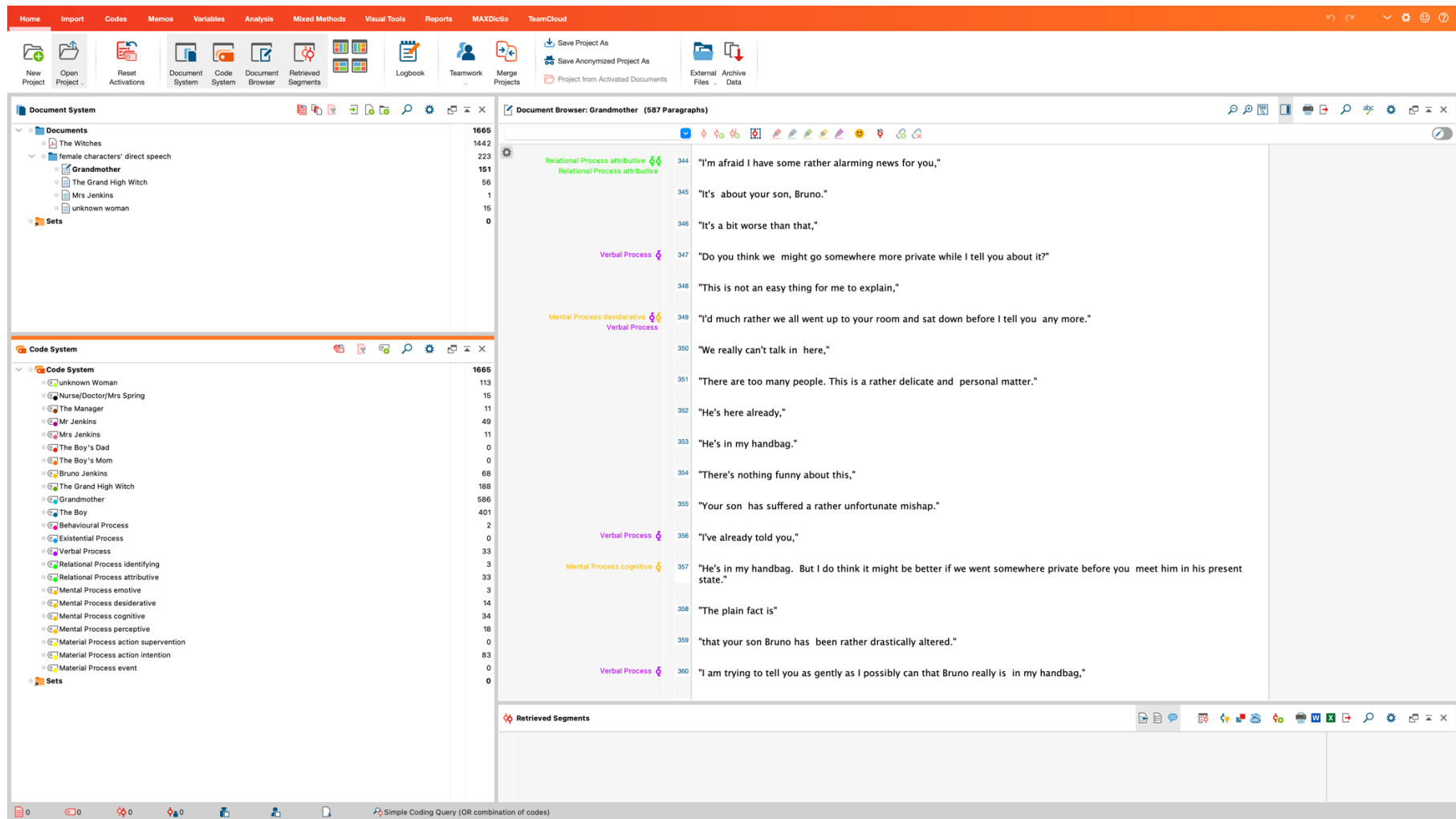


Figure 10 Overview of MAXQDA for *The Witches* (Grandmother)

The screenshot displays the MAXQDA software interface, which is used for qualitative data analysis. The interface is divided into several main sections:

- Top Menu Bar:** Includes options like Home, Import, Codes, Memos, Variables, Analysis, Mixed Methods, Visual Tools, Reports, MAXDictio, and TeamCloud.
- Toolbar:** Contains icons for various functions such as New Project, Open Project, Reset Activations, Document System, Code System, Document Browser, Retrieved Segments, Logbook, Teamwork, Merge Projects, Save Project As, Save Anonymized Project As, Project from Activated Documents, External Files, and Archive Data.
- Document System:** A tree view on the left showing the hierarchy of documents. Under 'Documents', there is a folder 'female characters' direct speech' containing several documents, including 'Miss Honey' (which is selected).
- Code System:** A tree view on the left showing the hierarchy of codes. Under 'Code System', there are several codes, including 'Amanda Thripp', 'Hortensia', 'Nigel/Rupert/Eric/Wilfred', 'Fred/Parrot', 'Author/unknown', 'Bruce Bogtrotter', 'Lavender', 'Mrs Phelps', 'Michael Wormwood', 'Mrs Wormwood', 'Mr Wormwood', 'Miss Trunchbull', 'Miss Honey', 'Matilda Wormwood', 'Behavioural Process', 'Existential Process', 'Verbal Process', 'Relational Process identifying', 'Relational Process attributive', 'Mental Process emotive', 'Mental Process desiderative', 'Mental Process cognitive', 'Mental Process perceptive', 'Material Process action supervention', 'Material Process action intention', and 'Material Process event'.
- Document Browser: Miss Honey (404 Paragraphs):** A large window on the right showing the text of the document 'Miss Honey'. The text is displayed in a list format with line numbers (e.g., 1516, 601, 195, 237, 98, 17, 6, 11, 36, 1, 0). The text includes several paragraphs of dialogue and narrative. The browser also shows a list of codes (e.g., Material Process action intention, Mental Process perceptive, Mental Process cognitive, Material Process action intention, Verbal Process, Material Process action intention, Mental Process desiderative, Relational Process identifying, Mental Process emotive) applied to the text.
- Retrieved Segments:** A section at the bottom right showing a list of retrieved segments, with a total of 601 segments.

Figure 11 Overview of MAXQDA for Matilda (Miss Honey)

7.1. Zusammenfassung

Im Zuge der #MeToo Bewegung hat die Forschungsarbeit im Bereich der Gleichberechtigung zwischen Mann und Frau an Wichtigkeit gewonnen. Kinder- und Jugendliteratur zählt zu den Bereichen, in welchen Darstellungen von Geschlechterungleichheiten noch immer häufig aufzufinden sind. Bücher spielen eine grundlegende Rolle in der Entwicklung von Kindern. Es fördert nicht nur die Kreativität und fördert Intelligenz, sondern hat auch eine große Auswirkung auf die Persönlichkeitsbildung und das Sozialverhalten des Kindes. Untersuchungen haben gezeigt, dass viele der beliebtesten Bücher für Kinder und Jugendliche Geschlechterungleichheiten hervorheben und sogar verherrlichen. Roald Dahl ist einer der Autoren welchem unter anderem Sexismus, Rassismus und Antisemitismus vorgeworfen werden. Die meisten Untersuchungen in diesem Bereich der Literaturkritik beziehen sich auf rein qualitative Methoden. Diese Arbeit verwendet Mixed-Methods, um zu ermitteln wie Roald Dahl weibliche Protagonisten in drei seiner Bücher darzustellen. Die analysierten Daten stammen von direkten Reden der weiblichen Protagonisten aus den Büchern *Charlie und die Schokoladenfabrik*, *Hexen hexen* und *Matilda*. Die Arbeit bedient sich der Methode der Transitivitätsanalyse für den quantitativen Teil, sowie der Feministischen Stilistik nach Sara Mills (1995). Die Resultate zeigen, dass Roald Dahl Frauen und Mädchen in allen der drei Bücher auf herabsetzende Weise darstellt. Zudem wurden unzählige Geschlechterstereotype aufgewiesen. Aufgrund dessen, wurde die (vereinfachte) Mixed-Methods Analyse vorgeschlagen, um Kindern und Jugendlichen eine kritische Evaluation von Literatur zu ermöglichen und die Darstellungen der Bücher anhand zeitgemäßer Wertvorstellungen zu beurteilen.

Schlagwörter: Geschlechtergleichheit, Transitivitätsanalyse, Feministische Stilistik, Roald Dahl