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**Daenerys Targaryen's Characterisation in the Ideational
Metafunction of HOB's *Game of Thrones***

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ABSTRACT

*This study appealed to the theoretical lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as developed by Halliday (1966); the notional locale of characterisation as espoused by DiYanni (2002); and the methodological boundaries of Corpus Linguistics (CL) as alluded to by Wu (2009), to study the characterisation of Daenerys Targaryen in the ideational metafunction of HOB's *Game of Thrones*. This research pursued a monogeneric corpus-based CL methodology because it drew quotes associated with Daenerys Targaryen from a single textual source *Game of Thrones*. For its methodology, the study adopted the descriptive research design under which the qualitative approach was used. Content analysis was used as a method in analysing data obtained qualitatively. Data collection and analysis drew on Wu (2009) and proceeded as follows: having read the quotes associated with Daenerys Targaryen as extracted from Episodes of *Game of Thrones*, the corpus was fed into the UAM Corpus Tool for semi-automated annotation of process-types. Thereafter, lexical and grammatical patterns associated with Daenerys Targaryen were extracted. This was followed by the manual analysis of the data in accordance to Halliday (1971) in order to explore the characterisation of Daenerys Targaryen. The findings have*

revealed that being a television drama series in which dialogue is key, Daenerys is accorded verbal processes fused with MaPs, MePs and RePs in clausal mapping of SFL transitivity. As a Sayer of Quoted Verbiage, Daenerys strategically places herself or other people as clausal Actor, Goal, Sensor, Carrier or Phenomenon in transitivity. Within the Circumstance component of her VePs, Daenerys further manipulates the content of the adjuncts for purposes of shaping her characterisation in the ideational metafunction of HOB's *Game of Thrones*. Through the aforementioned transitivity manipulation, Daenerys is characterised as a feminist who is entitled, determined, ruthless, proud and just, intelligent, unforgiving and strategic in nature. The study concludes that Daenerys Targaryen is deliberately accorded particular process-types whose grammatical placement in SFL transitivity characterises her in a different way from the other characters she appears with in HOB's *Game of Thrones*.

Key words: *Game of Thrones*, Daenerys Targaryen, Characterisation, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Corpus Linguistics (CL), SFL transitivity, Corpus-based Methodology.

1.0. Introduction

There exists a theoretical intercourse between the systematicity nature of language and the various functions that such systems of language perform in society (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). As language users engage in instances of language – whether in real life or in fictional works such as novels or movies – they use the available system of a particular language to perform a particular function. One of the perspectives to language that has gained momentum in this regard is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as developed by Halliday (1966). SFL postulates that every time we are engaged in a piece of discourse, we make choices from a constellation of grammatical resources that a particular language we are using avails, in order to communicate something in particular. Consequently, language is viewed as a semiotic resource for meaning making that performs three functions simultaneously. These functions are the ideational, interpersonal and textual functions. While the ideational metafunction of language deals with the Field of the text by expressing the clausal experiences of a text (Droga and Humphrey, 2002), the interpersonal metafunction of language deals with the Tenor of a text by “supplying information and resources for enacting (i.e. establishing and maintaining) social relations” (Caffarel, 2006: p.5). The third metafunction of language deals with textual Mode by focussing on the functions of language as expressed through the textual systems of a text.

Of the three metafunctions of language, this study focuses on the ideational metafunction in relation to *Game of Thrones* – an American television series which began in 2011. *Game of Thrones* is a “long-form serial narrative for television in a genre hybrid” incorporating production values “at a quasicinematic level” (Nelson, 2007: p.38). The episodes are designed to advance the serialised storylines, which revolve around three main families (Houses Stark, Lannister and Baratheon), and the lengths to which they will go to obtain power or to ensure the rightful people are in power. The narrative follows a chronological order, but alternates between story threads. The serial is set in the Middle Ages, in a “land that bears some resemblance in geography, technology and population to King Arthur's Britain and JRR Tolkien's *Middleearth*” (McNamara 2011, online), and is based on England's *War of the Roses* (Craig, 2012), evident from the intrigue revolving around the rightful heir to the throne. The story is set in the imaginary world of Westeros and Essos, with Westeros being the continental setting where most of the plot takes place. The continent is surrounded by water, with the exception of the North. The setting of Westeros thus mirrors English geography (Pederson, 2017). Three hundred years prior to the events of the series, seven houses each ruled separate regions in the country. These were: the Starks who were the Kings of the North; the

Greyjoys as Kings of the Iron Islands; the Tullys who were Kings of the Riverlands; the Arryns – Kings of the Vale; the Tyrells as Kings of the Reach; the Baratheons who were Kings of the Stormlands; and the Martells who were Kings of the Dorne. A new house – the Targaryens – conquered them all and established themselves as rulers of the Seven Kingdoms, a name used interchangeably with Westeros.

Within the broader scope of the plot of *Game of Thrones*, this article focuses on a character named Daenerys Targaryen. When Daenerys is born, her family is in the midst of a civil war as her brother Rhaegar has kidnapped a noble woman who is promised to another lord by the name of Robert Baratheon. The lord leads a rebellion against the Targaryens for stealing his bride. The rebellion, the result of the male gaze upon women, causes the death of Daenerys' family, except for her other brother Viserys and herself, and forces them to run from Robert's forces (Reeves, 2017). From the onset, Daenerys is a humiliated victim and when she looks at the older Drogo, she is terrified: "[his] face was hard and cruel, his eyes as cold and dark as onyx ... 'I don't want to be his queen,' she heard herself say in a small, thin voice." But Viserys couldn't care less. "He smiled at her. 'I'd let his whole khalasar fuck you if need be, sweet sister, all 40, 000 men, and their horses, too, if that was what it took to get my army'" (Martin, 2011: n.p.). Frightened at first, Daenerys ultimately learns many skills of judgement and leadership while on the grassy steppes, and earns the respect of many Dothraki. Unfortunately, her husband takes a fatal wound in battle and passes away. But in this moment of loss, a miracle occurs to Daenerys: three extinct dragon eggs, given to her as a wedding gift, gain new life in the fire of her husband's funeral pyre. Daenerys becomes the mother of the three new dragons.

Daenerys' character arc epitomises the idea of the just and fair ruler who shakes up the existing hegemonic structures. Living in exile after the dethronement of her father, King Aerys II, she is first given the Dothraki Lord Khal Drogo by her own brother Viserys, in exchange for an army in his attempt to reclaim the Iron Throne. After Viserys' and Drogo's demise, she attains agency by giving birth to three dragons (long extinct before her empowerment) and becomes a leader who begins conquering Westeros, freeing slaves in cities such as Meereen while pitting herself against the castes that have long governed the Seven Kingdoms. Although she is born a royal, she is an outsider who overcomes great difficulties and questions the conventions of power to achieve her goal (Virin and Ortega, 2019).

Daenerys Targaryen believes that she is the rightful queen of the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros. Her claim to the throne is descendent from her distant ancestor Aegon Targaryen, who used his three mighty dragons to bring the continent to its knees three hundred years ago. In spite of this legacy, no Targaryen has sat upon the Iron Throne in two decades, and Daenerys (also known as Dany) is the last surviving member of her family. Now, she is ready to retake the kingdom of her forefathers, but getting to this point has been no easy task. Dany – an exiled princess of the House Targaryen – does so in the hopes of making the sorcerers who rule the city of Qarth support her in her quest to raise an army so she can return from exile and conquer what was taken from her and her family. But she knows she is risking all: she has no way of knowing whether she can trust the sorcerers, especially Pree, not to mention no way of knowing whether she can survive their magic (Schmidt, 2019).

Her acquisition of these powerful new beasts draws powerful eyes to herself. Daenerys travels through many of the great cities of Essos, growing wiser and stronger. Ultimately, she comes to a region known as Slaver's Bay, a region built upon enslavement and hierarchical castes and governed by three great cities: Meereen, Astapor and Yunkai. Taking control of the eunuch-slave army known as the Unsullied, Daenerys successfully launches a coup and overthrows the oligarchs of the greatest city, Meereen. As Queen, Daenerys abolishes slavery in Meereen but holds a reign plagued with cultural tensions. This domestic instability sky-rockets after Daenerys is captured by another clan of Dothraki. While Dany is taken to the Dothraki capital of Vaes Dothraki, her council (led by Tyron

Lannister) attempts to manage/run the city in her absence. In a triumphant moment, however, Dany is able to trap the corrupt leaders of the Dothraki in a burning building while she emerges unscathed due to her strange immunity to fire. This show of supernatural powers earns her the loyalty of a huge portion of the Dothraki: almost 100, 000 in number. With this new army and her fully grown dragons, Dany returns to Meereen. When she arrives, she finds the city under siege by a coalition of slave masters from all around Slaver's Bay. The might of the slavers is nothing in the face of a combined army of dragons, Dothraki hordes, and unsullied legions. Claiming the slaver's navy, she abolishes slavery for good in Slaver's Bay and renames the region the 'Bay of Dragons'. After gaining the allegiance of Lady Olenna Tyrell and Ellaria Sand (two ruling ladies of major Westerosi armies) and the navy of the Greyjoy siblings, Yara and Theon, Dany finally sets sail to conquer Westeros in the name of her ancestors (Schmidt, 2019).

This article drew upon DiYanni's (2002) conceptualization of characterisation; Halliday's (1966) theoretical binoculars of SFL; and Wu's (2009) conceptualisation of the methodological locale of Corpus Linguistics (CL), in order to examine the characterisation of Daenerys Targaryen in HBO's *Game of Thrones*. The objectives of the study were twofold: to identify transitivity patterns attributed to Daenerys Targaryen in *Game of Thrones*; and to establish how such linguistic patterns enhance her characterisation. By conducting this study, the current research has further demonstrated the versatility of SFL and CL in linguistic and literary enquiry, and added to existing literature on SFL and CL (e.g. Kapau and Banda, 2019) and *Game of Thrones* (e.g. Virin and Ortega, 2019).

2.0. Statement of the Problem

Although a number of studies have been conducted on *Game of Thrones* (e.g. Martin, 2011; Schmidt, 2019; and Virin and Ortega, 2019), the studies have focused on a philosophical approach to the series, devoid of linguistic details. In like manner, although SFL and CL have been used to study characterisation in the media and literary texts (e.g. Mwinlaaru, 2012; Muhammad and Banda, 2016; Kapau and Banda, 2019), no study has endeavoured to characterisation in *Game of Thrones* from the theoretical and methodological angles of SFL and CL respectively. Furthermore, although Daenerys Targaryen is one of the principle characters in *Game of Thrones* and mentioned by a number of studies conducted on the serial (e.g. Virin and Ortega, 2019), her character has never been critically studied from the angle of stylistics like the current study. Therefore, the statement of the problem, put in question form, is: what do the linguistic transitivity patterns attributed to Daenerys Targaryen in HBO's *Game of Thrones* tell us about her character? By accounting for the linguistic detail that shape Daenerys' character, the current study has provided a valuable alternative not only to the study and appreciation of *Game of Thrones* but also to Daenerys Targaryen – Queen of Meereen; Khaleesi of the Great Grass Sea; Mother of Dragons; The Unburnt; Breaker of Chains; Queen of the Andals and the First Men; Protector of the Seven Kingdoms; and Lady of Dragonstone.

3.0. Literature Review

There are a number of studies relevant to the current enquiry. Of initial relevance to the current study are studies done on Daenerys by Tracy and Robin (2007); Szaszi (2015); Schubart and Gjelsvik (2016); Makjanić (2018); and Bollinger-Deters (2018). Tracy and Robin (2007) observe that Daenerys is a character filled with pride because of her ancestry and her achievements. On the other hand, Szaszi (2015) and Schubart and Gjelsvik (2016) focus on the feminist nature of Daenerys from a philosophical perspective by focusing on Daenerys' rise to power and how such a rise shapes her role in the serial. Unlike Tracy and Robin (2007); Szaszi (2015); and Schubart and Gjelsvik (2016), Makjanić (2018) has approached Daenerys from the angle of emotions, particularly the emotion of mercy and established that Daenerys has no mercy for those that defy her. Lastly, Bollinger-Deters (2018) has

analysed Daenerys in terms of her ancestry and how this shaped her character. Though equally exploring character traits, the current study significantly differs from studies conducted by Tracy and Robin (2007); Szaszi (2015); Schubart and Gjelsvik (2016); Makjanić (2018); and Bollinger-Deters (2018) in that while they used philosophical and non-linguistic means to explore Daenerys, the current study uses linguistics to explore the grammatical mapping of process-types attributed to Daenerys in the grammar of the clause and how such choices have a provable bearing on her character. Secondly, the current study uses a linguistic software designed in Corpus Linguistics (CL) to specifically annotate and analyse grammatical instances and provide valuable information that a philosophical approach can never bring to the fore. Through this, this article has provided a verifiable platform to non-linguistic but similar studies such as that of Makjanić (2018). By exploring all these knowledge gaps, the current study has shown the relevance of linguistics in verifying claims and obtaining accurate evidence to that effect.

Besides studies that have focussed on Daenerys are those that have made a general commentary on *Game of Thrones*. Of importance is Larrington (2016) who has investigated the historical inspiration behind *A Song of Ice and Fire* (ASOIAF) and has commented on the medievalism of the book series. Larrington (2016) has observed that the structures of power and knowledge that Martin depicts in ASOIAF are quite similar to structures that one can find in medieval society, and more closely, medieval England. Larrington (2016:n.p.) has further explained that “[like] Tolkien’s *Middle Earth*, *Game of Thrones/A Song of Ice and Fire* constructs its fantasy out of familiar building blocks: familiar, that is, to us medieval scholars [...] out of the medieval west, with its recognizable social institutions of chivalry, kingship, its conventions of inheritance and masculinity [...]” Larrington’s book has been very helpful to make comparisons between ASOIAF, medieval England and the 21st century. However, similarities and differences can be drawn between Larrington (2016) and the present study. Although Larrington (2016) and this study have both looked at *Game of Thrones*, Larrington (2016) has concentrated on investigating the historical inspiration of ASOIAF while this study zeroes in on the characterisation of Daenerys Targaryen. The shift from historical inspiration which Larrington (2016) focussed on to characterisation by linguistic tools which this study has explored, provides further knowledge from where Larrington (2016) ended in scope.

Like Larrington (2016), Wawrzyniak’s (2016) has explored the possibility of Martin also being affected by and taking inspiration from the 21st Century. Her study has employed literary postmodernism and blended this into the concepts of myths, history and Medievalism in *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Her findings have indicated that Martin’s conceptualisation of ASOIAF is partly premised on and affected by inspiration from the 21st Century. Wawrzyniak (2016) is identical to that of Larrington (2016) and the current study on the basis of focussing on the same literary work. However, while Wawrzyniak (2016) has looked at the ASOIAF in terms of the literary notion of postmodernism in its literary sense, this study adopts postmodernism in its functional state, under the theoretical dimensions of Systemic Functional Linguistics. In addition, while Wawrzyniak (2016) has investigated postmodernism and Medievalism in the absence of detailed character analysis, this study has devoted itself to character analysis albeit of one character. This is the knowledge gap that the current study has bridged in relation to Wawrzyniak (2016).

Apart from studies on ASOIAF/*Game of Thrones*, there are also studies on SFL, CL and characterisation which are of theoretical importance to the current study. Of great significance to this study is Muhammad and Banda (2016: p.123 – 154) who, like the current study, have employed the transitivity model in SFL and CL methodology to study how the character of Mandela (the South African antiapartheid icon) has been represented in the Arabic media. The outcomes of their study established that the characterisation of Mandela in the Arabic media depends on process-type manipulation in the grammar of the clause (SFL transitivity). The study showed that in transitivity obtained from Aljazeera website, Mandela is mainly presented as the Actor or the main Agent.

Muhammad and Banda (2016:p.123) concluded that such a choice was done “not only for the sentimental reasons, but also to evoke readers’ sympathy regarding his wife’s infidelities.” Like Muhammad and Banda (2016), this study used SFL and CL-methodology to provide grammatical footing of the study upon which other theories of analysis such as characterisation were grounded in order to underscore the versatility of SFL and CL in literary and linguistic enquiry. However, while Muhammad and Banda (2016) have employed SFL, CDA and CL in exploring character of Mandela, this study excluded CDA approach but adopted the notion of characterisation as conceptualised by DiYanni (2002). By providing an alternative concept and subject of analysis, the current research added further knowledge to where Muhammad and Banda (2016) ended.

4.0. Theoretical Underpinnings

4.1.1. Systemic Functional Linguistics

As a theoretical approach to the study of language, the earlier roots of Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) are famously linked to the anthropological works of Malinowski who began viewing language to be more than just structure. However, the father of SFL is widely agreed to be Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday because of his contributions towards making SFL to be what it is today (Droga and Humphrey, 2002; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; O’Donnell, 2012; and Kapau and Banda, 2019).

As a theory and approach to language, SFL is anchored on the central argument that language is a resource for meaning making. Arising from the aforementioned central argument, SFL postulates that every piece of discourse (e.g. written or spoken) is a result of delicate linguistic choices we as language users make within the provisions of the grammatical systems of the language in order to convey a particular meaning. This is what makes the systematicity nature of language (i.e. language system) to have a functionality dimension (language function) in society (Droga and Humphrey, 2002; and Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) contend that the system of language is hierarchically ordered into four strata. The process of language stratification layers language strata into: the phonology/graphology stratum (which deals with the sound and writing systems of language); stratum of lexicogrammar (which is lexicon-based); stratum of semantics (meaning-based); and stratum of context (which deals with the context of situation and the context of culture). SFL further theorises that language performs three functions simultaneously. The functions, called metafunctions, are: the ideational metafunction; interpersonal metafunction; and the textual metafunction. According to Droga and Humphrey (2002), the ideational metafunction deals with the Field of the text and achieves its function by focussing on the experiences of participants in discourse. On the other hand, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) have noted that unlike the ideational metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction looks at how texts establish and maintain social relations in the Tenor of the text. The third metafunction is called the textual metafunction: it looks at textual Mode and how spoken and written language is coherently and meaningfully organised (Caffarel, 2006; and Hassan, 2009).

From the three metafunctions of language, this study focussed on the ideational metafunction in order to establish how the grammar of the clause – technically known as SFL transitivity – influences the characterisation of Daenerys Targaryen. SFL transitivity is a “syntactico-semantic concept which refers to the manner in which a writer or speaker represents, at clausal level of language, his experience of the real world or his own world of consciousness” (Mwinlaaru, 2012: p. 21). SFL transitivity argues that clauses are divided into six process-types, based on the type of verb they take. These are material, mental, relational, behavioural, verbal and existential processes. Material processes (henceforth MaPs) are processes of doing and happening in the physical world. They have inherent clause element called the Actor (doer of things) and an optional element known as the Goal. In some cases, MaPs have a third clausal element called the Circumstance whose grammatical role is to express

the semantic classes of Extent; Location; Manner; Cause; Contingency; Accompaniment; Role; Matter; and Angle in the clause. Besides MaPs are mental processes (henceforth MePs). While MaPs are externalised processes, MePs are internalised ones as they encode meanings of feeling, thinking and perception. MePs have an obligatory inherent clause participant called the Sensor who/which feels, thinks and perceives; and the Phenomenon which is that which is thought, felt or perceived by the Sensor (Eggins, 1994; and Droga and Humphrey, 2002). Relational processes (henceforth RePs) are processes of having and being and are subcategorised into possessive RePs (e.g. *X has Y*); intensive RePs (e.g. *X is Y*); and circumstantial RePs (e.g. *X is at Y*). The key clausal participants in RePs are the Carrier (carrier of Attribute, Token or Value) and that which is associated with the Carrier, namely, the Attribute, the Token or the Value (Eggins, 1994; Droga and Humphrey, 2002).

MaPs, MePs and RePs are known as the major process-types while verbal, behavioural and existential processes are known as minor processes because they can be merged into the major three process-types. Verbal processes (henceforth VePs) are at the boarder of MePs and RePs because they bring out ideas constructed in human consciousness and those enacted in the form of language. The Sayer is the initiator of the Process in VePs while that which is said is called the Verbiage and the thing or person to which the Verbiage is directed is known as the Target or Recipient. Behavioural processes (henceforth BePs) are the second minor process-type and they focus on physiological and psychological behaviour. For this, BePs are found at the boarder of MaPs and MePs. The Behaver is the main clause participant in BePs while the form of behaviour expressed (which is optional element) is called the Range. Existential processes (henceforth ExPs) are the last type of process-types and deal with all forms of existence identified as the Existent and expressed by *there* (Droga and Humphrey, 2002; Eggins, 2004; and Kapau and Banda, 2019).

Because this study collected data from the serial *Game of Thrones* as portrayed by HOB and devoid of textual narration, the article focussed on VePs because in the absence of a narrator, conversation (attained through mainly through VePs) is what keeps most movies going. For this, all other process-types as espoused by SFL were discussed as they emerged from the minor process-type of VePs.

4.1.2. Characterisation

The current study further adopted the literary notion of characterisation as conceptualised by DiYanni (2002). According to DiYanni (2002) as paraphrased by Mwinlaaru (2012), characterisation refers to ways by which writers (e.g. Martin, the writer of *Game of Thrones/ASOIAF*) present, reveal and develop character in a literary work such that readers are able to make judgements and reinforce their view of the themes of the text. DiYanni (2002) has further noted that characterisation is achieved through different ways, among them being: characterisation through what characters say about themselves or about others; what a character does in space and time; linguistic choices by the author (which include style); and so forth. By focussing on the verbal processes and other process-types embedded in the VePs in the serial *Game of Thrones*, this study explored characterisation of Daenerys Targaryen.

5.0. Methodology

Content analysis was used as a method in analysing data obtained qualitatively (Kothari, 1985: p.72; Brink and Wood, 1998: p.123; Kumar, 2005: p.10; and Goertzen, 2017: p.12 – p.18). This was in accordance to Wu (2009, p.138) who has argued that Corpus Linguistics (CL) “is a methodology for investigating language and language use and obtaining ... evidence through large quantities of naturally occurring texts – called the corpora.” Data collection and analysis proceeded as follows: having read the quotes associated with Daenerys Targaryen as extracted from Episodes of GOT, the corpus was fed into the UAM Corpus Tool for semi-automated annotation.

Thereafter, lexical and grammatical patterns associated with Targaryen were extracted. This was followed by the manual analysis of the data in accordance to theorisation pertaining SFL and characterisation in order to explore the characterisation of Daenerys Targaryen. The corpora involved a single serial, therefore, the study was monogeneric as opposed to multigeneric corpus based studies which look at more than one corpus.

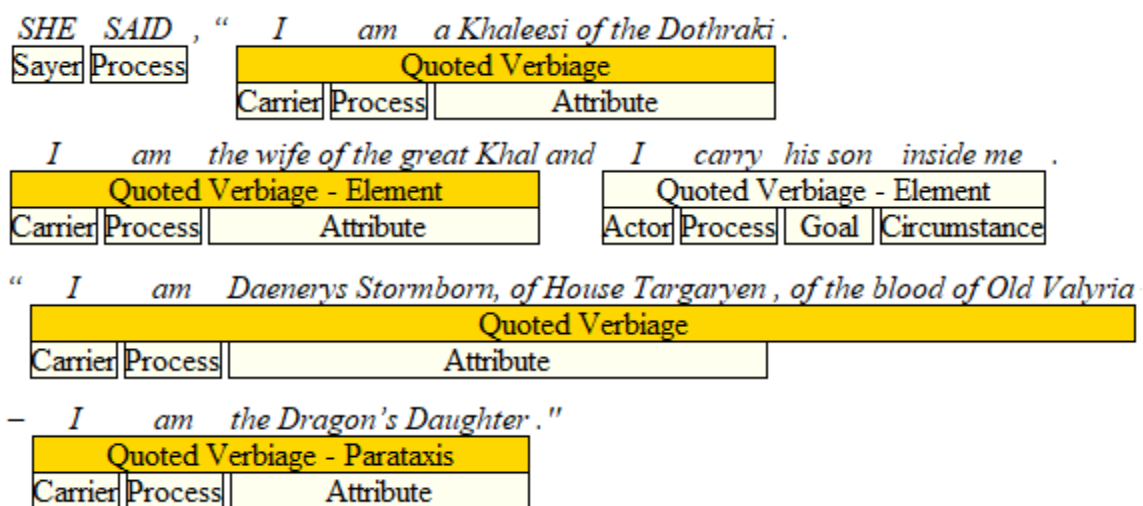
6.0. Discussion/Findings

The findings of the study revealed that the VePs and other infused process-types in VePs attributed to Daenerys Targaryen are embedded with a number of transitivity patterns that are stylistically tailored bring to the fore a number of character traits she possesses as shown in subsequent subsections.

6.1. Entitled

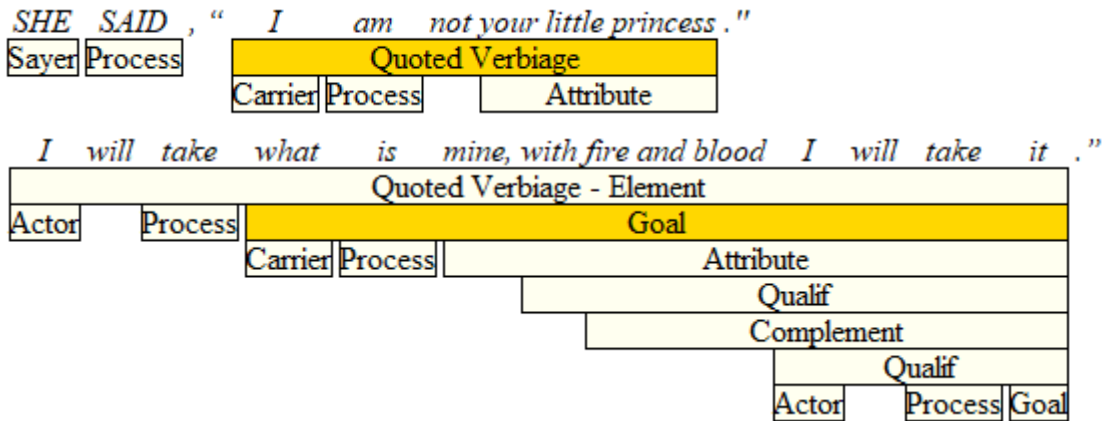
Daenerys Targaryen’s character of entitlement is seen throughout HOB’s *Game of Thrones*. She feels she is entitled to everything royal and possessions attributed to that, which include the Iron Throne. This is illustrated in (1) below:

(1)



In (1), Daenerys is the Sayer identified as *She* and associates herself with VePs whose Quoted Verbiage contain RePs introduced by the inherent clause participant of Carrier identified as *I* and the attributive relational Process *am*. Within the Quoted Verbiage in (1), Daenerys is the Carrier who associates herself with kingship Attributes, notably, *a Khaleesi of the Dothraki; the wife of the great Khal; and Daenerys Stormborn, of house Targaryen, of the blood of Old Valyria*. By associating herself with kingship attributes, Daenerys consolidates her entitlement to the Iron Throne and directly confronts anyone who thinks of challenging her. In (1), she further materialises her entitlement by associating herself with a Quoted Verbiage containing a MaP where she turns herself into an Actor {*I*} biologically tasked to *carry* {Process} *his [the great Khal]* not anywhere else but *inside me* {Circumstance of Location: *Where?*}. With such levels of entitlement, Daenerys does not hesitate to threaten her enemies as shown in (2) below:

(2)

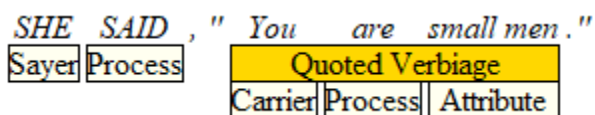


In (2), Daenerys threatens his enemies by discarding the narrative of belittling through a Quoted Verbiage *I am not a little princess*, before going on the offensive as an Actor identified as *I* whose Goal is to take *what is mine*. Daenerys also uses the grammatical Qualifier in (2) to underscore how she is to take what is hers: *with fire and blood I will take it*. This shows that she is confident of her entitlement and like Shaka Zulu, she will stop at nothing to get it by force. That Daenerys is an entitled character who associates herself with kingship terms such as *dragons* confirms the postulations of Bollinger-Deters (2018) who observes that for Daenerys, the birth of her dragons marks a return to her ancestry (entitlement) as there have been no dragons since the time of Aegon the Conqueror. Though Daenerys’ dragons are born of dire necessity, sacrifice, and opportunity, their dormancy until this convergence of desperation signifies an irony specifically within the ceremonial sacrifice itself. The Targaryen family tree stands among a legendary few influential white noble families, standing almost alone in their magical monopoly that magnifies and validates their power as something divine and laced with flippant bouts of madness, causing a bloody violent characterization. Through their dragon connectivity, great leaders of House Targaryen such as Daenerys grandfather King Aegon I, infamously known as Aegon the Conqueror, becomes the founder and first King of the Targaryen dynasty, whose rise to power sets a violent tone for his descendants (Bollinger-Deters, 2018). With such an umbilical attachment to an ancestry of dragons, power, necessity and influence, it is not surprising that Daenerys is attributed grammatical patterns in VePs, RePs and MaPs to project her as an entitled character. This study has, therefore, consolidated and validated Bollinger-Deters’ (2018) observation about ancestry and entitlement in HOB’s *Game of Thrones*.

6.2. Feminist

Apart from Daenerys being entitled, the grammatical patterns attributed to her show that she is also a feminist. For example, when Daenerys is confronted about taking over the Dothraki, she reminds men and advisors around her as validated in (3) below:

(3)



"None of you are fit to lead the Dothraki."

Quoted Verbiage				
Carrier	Process	Attribute	DObj	
			Process	Goal

"But I am and so I will."

Quoted Verbiage	
Element	
Subj	Process

"Do not presume to teach me lessons."

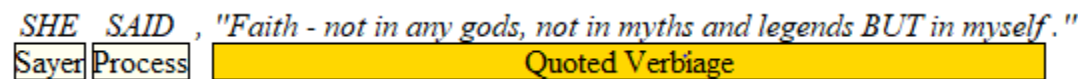
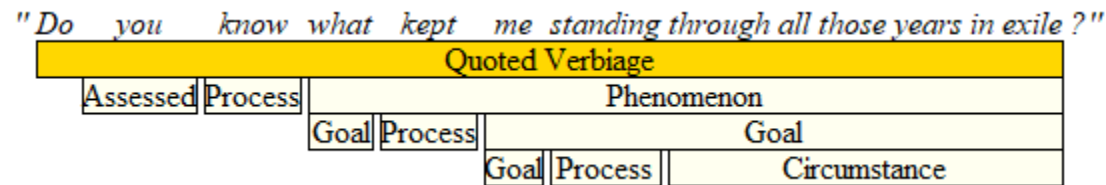
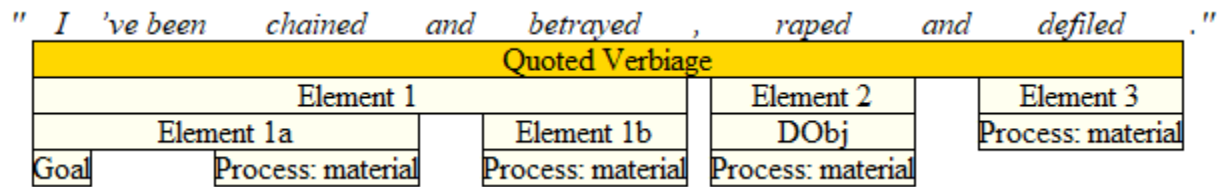
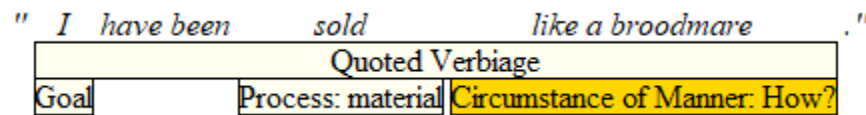
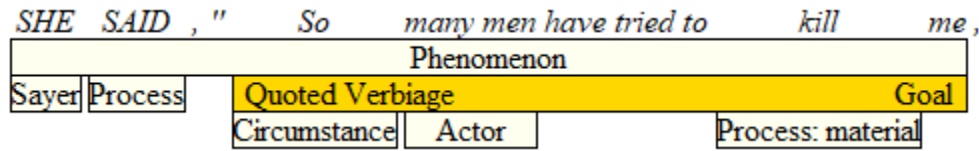
Quoted Verbiage				
Assessed	Process	Phenomenon		
		Process	Recipient	Goal

Daenerys confronts everyone who thinks they can lead the Dothraki in (3). She begins by confronting sexism by way of reducing men to Carriers of smallness (i.e. *You {Carrier} are small men {Attribute}*) and portrays men as negative Carriers through the clausal choice of *[none] of you* as transitivity Carrier in RePs marked by the Attribute *fit*, and fine-tuned to the Direct Object, notably, *lead the Dothraki*. Through an interplay of VePs infused with RePs (e.g. *You are small men*) and MePs (e.g. *Do not presume to teach me lessons*), Daenerys' Quoted Verbiage demasculinates the male entitlement to rule, thereby slapping patriarchy in the face. After demolition sexist patriarchy, Daenerys proceeds to qualify herself for leadership of the Dothraki in (3) by stating, through a Quoted Verbiage whose subject is herself and introduced by the contrastive conjunction *but*, that *[but] I am and so I will; [do] not presume to teach me lessons*. By stating that men surrounding her are small men unfit for leadership of the Dothraki, Daenerys spits on masculinity while clothing the stereotyped sexual objectification of the female. Daenerys refuses to be relegated to leadership's Other. Instead, she strategically positions herself as the Self in leadership by defying social constructs of who should lead. The linguistic findings of this study on the feminist nature of Daenerys are in line with Schubart and Gjelsvik's (2016) arguments who contend that Daenerys is a fantasy hero who breaks generic patterns, and forms a new puzzle out of the pieces. She combines emotions and elements that are stereotypically gendered male and female (male pride, a male dragon slayer, a damsel in distress), and claims agency for herself and others. Reeves (2017) used Hook's definition to show that Daenerys is a feminist "feminism was a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (Hooks, 2017: p.10). He argues that through her time in Essos, Dany births a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression, and she has made use of contemporary feminist methods to do this. She experienced sexism, sexual exploitation, and oppression in her early life, and these events caused her seek out and gain power and control so that she could prevent her experiences from being replicated. Initially, she gains sexual agency in her marriage and uses this power to gain a leadership position in her tribe, ultimately leading her people independent, after her husband is killed. This sets her in a position to enact the changes she wishes to see, freeing slaves and upsetting patriarchal dominance and control in this region of the world. These events display Daenerys' sensitivity to intersectional identities, recognizing that her experiences, while similar, will differ vastly from those of these people who have been enslaved since birth (Schubart and Gjelsvik, 2016; Reeves, 2017).

6.3. Determined

In addition, the grammatical arrangement and content of the linguistic data in process-types attributed to Daenerys have shown that she is a determined character. For example, when she reflects to her audience about her struggles in life and what makes her unrelenting, she observes:

(4)

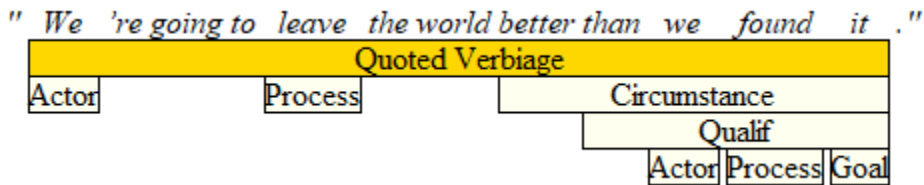
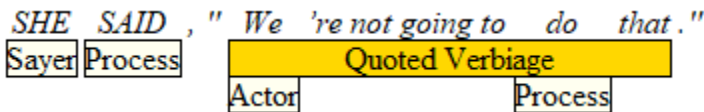
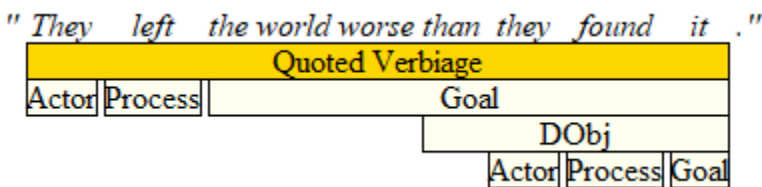
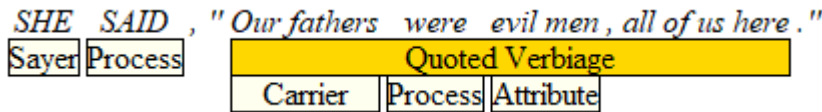


In (4), Daenerys recounts how she has survived the Dothraki, Meereen and other dangers in her quest for the Iron Throne. She demonstrates the grave nature of her situations by using MaPs embedded in VePs whose Processes are all material: *kill; sold; chained; betrayed; raped* and *defiled*. So hard were the times such that Daenerys observes that she was even disrespectfully degraded to being sold *like a broodmare* {Circumstance of Manner: *How?*}. In all this, she is the Goal of bad acts perpetuated mostly by men as clausal Actors in the battle for the Iron Throne. However, she manages to overcome all this through faith in herself – “not in gods, not in myths and legends.” Overall, her lamentations (4) highlight her feelings over persecutions and her continued triumph as a result even in moments when she is at one point forced to join a widow community; when she is captured by the Dothraki and brought to Vaes Dothraki to live in the Dosh Khaleen. Although she almost loses her freedom in imprisonment, she never gives up but uses the opportunity to strategise and defeat the Dothraki. This finding as illustrated in (4) above validates Reeves (2017) who notes that Daenerys is an epitome of determination as demonstrated by her ability to even kill her captivators the Khals by setting their building on fire.

6.4. Just and proud

Besides being feminist, determined and entitled in character, Daenerys is also just and proud. For example, as she conquers the slave cities, she frees the slaves and, proud of her achievements, she declares that the present generation should never walk the faulty path of its fathers. In this declaration, Daenerys does not only condemn the evil acts of her victims’ fathers but also objectively condemns her own fathers for contributing to the mess. She notes:

(5)

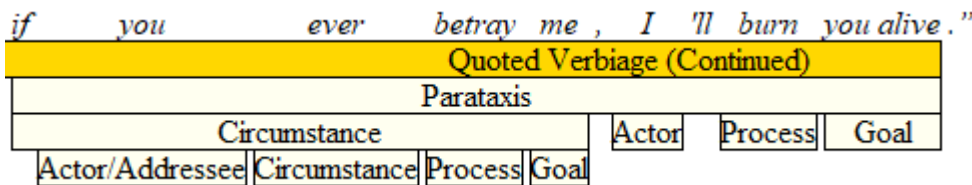
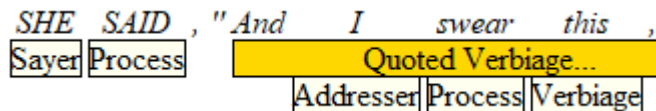
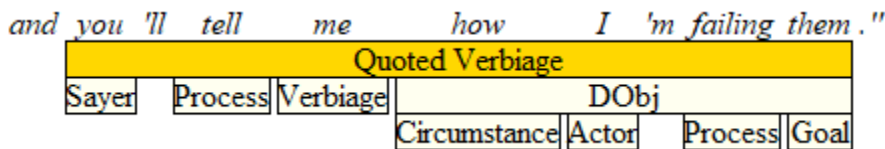
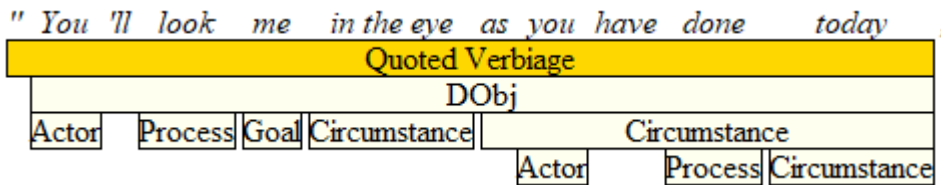
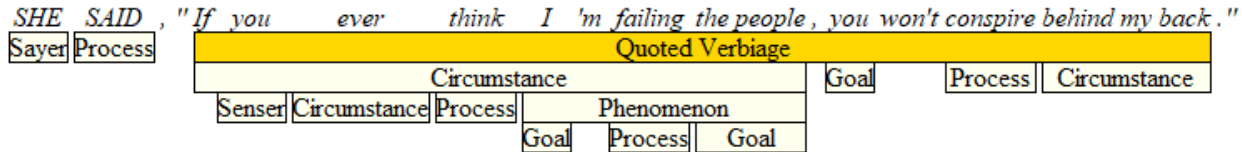


In (5), Daenerys seeks to end a worse world with her generation, and never to make the mistakes of the past generation to define her future. She wants to reward injustice with justice – not in form of punishment but in form of ceasefire and peace. Owing to this, the Quoted Verbiage attributed to Daenerys in (5) combines RePs, MaPs and VePs to appeal to states of being and having; does and actions; and sayings and telling. She begins by stating a fact of what their past fathers were through the attributive ReP {*were*}, conjoining *our Fathers* {Carrier: RePs} to *evil men* {Attribute} and provides impartiality by adding the Circumstance of Agency, namely, *all of us here*. Having said that, Daenerys proceeds to turn the forefathers into agents of destruction by qualifying them as Actors whose Goal was to make the world *worse than they found it*. This choice in transitivity makes her impartial, hence seeking justice in a ceasefire. It is for this reason that she excludes the forefathers as Actors in her subsequent Quoted Verbiage. Instead, she uses the inclusive pronoun *we* {Actor} to signal a new dawn and novel approach to injustices of the past. In this declaration, Daenerys is not just but also abandons the shame of her forefathers to embrace pride brought about by a new beginning. As Szaszi (2015) notes, Daenerys’ Targaryen conquest brings about change on many fronts. Among the major effects of her philosophy of conquest is that she conquers with minimal casualties and mostly stays to rule in order to build newer states built on modified old ones (e.g. the occupation of Old Meereen).

6.5. Ruthless

Daenerys is also a ruthless character, when provoked to be. As Makjanić (2018) observes, Daenerys is a character of no mercy for anyone who defies her. There is good reason for this, as her late father, justly dubbed *The Mad King*, was betrayed by his own nobles once they felt he was no longer fit to rule. As the show goes on, Daenerys becomes more and more ruthless and by the time she finally paves her way back to Westeros, she is ready to face her enemies as she becomes wise and unforgiving at the same time. She even warns Varys in “Stormborn:”

(6)



Example (6) demonstrates the ruthless nature of Daenerys through her Quoted Verbiage. She does not believe in beating round the bush but encourages Varys (a man) to look her *in the eye* {Circumstance of Location: *Where?*}. This is a display of courage and decisiveness in execution of leadership roles. She continues to underscore her ruthless nature by being the Actor in MaPs having a Circumstance of Temporal nature (i.e. *ever*) as part of her warnings together with a strong MaP *swear*, associated with material processes of action such as *burn* whose Goal is not an animal but a human being.

6.6. Intelligent and strategic

When Daenerys survives the burning ordeal unscathed and stands before the Dothraki as they bow to her and her show of force, she asks, rather than demand, their support, and tells them that they will be her equals, something no other Dothraki leader has done before. She declares:

(7)

“ Every khal who ever lived chose three bloodriders

Quoted Verbiage ...			
Assessed		Process	Phenomenon
Qualif			
Actor	Circumstance	Process	

to fight beside him and lead his tribe .”

Quoted Verbiage (Continued)			
DObj			
Element		Element	
Process	Circumstance of Location	Process	Goal

SHE SAID , “But I am not a khal .”

SAYER		Quoted Verbiage	
Sayer	Process	Carrier	Process
		Attribute	

“ I will not choose three blood riders INSTEAD I choose you all .”

Quoted Verbiage			
Assessed	Process	Phenomenon	
Qualif			
Process		DObj	
		Senser	Process
		Phenomenon	

In (7) Daenerys refuses to be a Khal by using negated attributive RePs fused within the Quoted Verbiage. This strategy materialises her as an excellent strategist who does not want to isolate herself from the rest of the people. She proceeds to offer a different approach to the rule of exclusion and inclusion by including the outcasts of the system to be part of her. Ultimately, she becomes the Sensor identified as *I* associated with *choose* {mental process: cognition} who embraces the Phenomenon identified as *you all*. This proclamation is followed by rousing support from all of the Dothraki, who unlike the slaves, have experienced freedom and recognize the choice not to follow Daenerys, resolving her tension of white saviorism by acknowledging these people of colour as her equals and removing the oppression of the male-dominated Dothraki culture (Reeves, 2017). Ultimately, Daenerys’ leadership style makes her intelligent and strategic.

7.0. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided a linguistic view to the characterisation of Daenerys Targaryen. By exploring grammatical data associated with her ability to stand against all odds; and her rise from shame to fame underscored by a plot structure that moves her from a poor girl to a lovable and admired queen, this article has shown the grammatical characterisation of Daenerys as one that casts her as entitled, feminist, determined, ruthless, proud and just, intelligent, unforgiving and strategist. Through these character traits, Daenerys manages to build an empire from scratch. From a poor orphan girl, she becomes a queen is loved, viewed powerful and is hated by enemies. Once her army is established, she embarks on a path to reclaim the Iron throne in Kings Landing which is in the hands of the Lannisters. Daenerys was nothing but a woman who believed that the Iron Throne belonged to her and ancestors the Targaryens.

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Biography

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