



# A Transitivity Analysis of Dean's Message in a University Context: An Analysis of Gender Variations in Academic Written Discourses

**Mohammad Husam Alhumsy**

College of Sciences and Theoretical Studies

Saudi Electronic University

Prince Saud Ibn Muhammad Ibn Muqrin Road, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia, 13316

Tel: +00966533649745

Email: [husam101010@gmail.com](mailto:husam101010@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** According to Halliday's theory of transitivity, readers can completely understand a text by identifying the precise language features that convey the author's purpose and intention. This paper focuses on analyzing a variety of process categories applied in academic written discourse at a university level. However, little research has compared the discourse patterns of male and female professors. Therefore, the current paper aims at investigating and comparing gender differences in academic written discourses between male and female deans' messages within a university setting. This study adopts critical discourse analysis of Halliday's theory of transitivity process types, representing the framework for this research. To examine transitivity process types, qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. Independent sample t-test has also been used to determine whether there is an effect of gender on the prevalence of transitivity process categories. The results disclosed that material processes are the most prevalent ones in both female and male deans' messages. Moreover, the results revealed that there is no substantial effect of gender on the prevalence of transitivity process categories. Examining the roles and circumstances of participants could yield more relevant information for future studies.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis, dean's message, gender, transitivity analysis, university context

Received: May 22, 2024 Revised: August 28, 2024 Accepted: October 3, 2024

## Introduction

The ability to use a language is one of the attributes that human beings enjoy and are able to communicate with one another (Rezaee, Aghagolzadeh, & Birjandi, 2015). Yule (2006, p. 8) pointed out that "When we use language to say something to someone, we are intentionally communicating with that person." This highlights the role of communication in that it can be nonverbally or verbally functioned for the sake of conveying messages among individuals (Sianturi & Megasari, 2023). For example, Brinia, Selimi, Dimos, and Kondea (2022) stated that interaction in which different

messages are sent or received can be referred to as communication. Delving into affairs of higher scientific institutions, communication delivered by both male and female professors and their students can obviously take place in higher institutions such as universities, accentuating the role of the language use between male and female deans at universities. This study addresses male and female deans' variations in academic written discourses. For this purpose, comparing and contrasting the ways that men and women use language is crucial, as well as analyzing the linguistic decisions each gender made since research affirmed that gender variations exist in language use and decision-making (Yule, 2014). Thus, it is important to recognize similarities and differences in the usage of language as well as analyze the linguistic options conducted by female and male university deans.

To understand language structure in discourse, Salsabila, Umam, Nurjanah, Wahyuningsih, and Lestari (2024) pointed out that the patterns and rules that control the arrangement and organization of words in a language are referred to as its language structure. For example, by using words, phrases, and other forms of language structures, the messages can be significantly conveyed in a structured way by male and female individuals through using language discourse (Salsabila et al., 2024). In this case, words, phrases, and linguistic constructions that refer to males or females can be used to indicate gender variations in language (Salsabila et al., 2024). Thus, the language chosen by the speaker or writer will affect the listener's or reader's cognitive process (Akingbade, Olusegun, & Bamidele, 2022).

To support the above statements, it is crucial that this article use a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of Halliday's theory of transitivity process types. Halliday and Matthiessen (2013, p. 23) pointed out that language is "a resource for making meaning, and meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice." They also contended that in order to communicate with one another and make sense of the world around us, we need language. This implies that the grammar needs to communicate with non-linguistic entities.

In short, research asserted that an area of crucial interdisciplinary research in language education has been gender (Widodo & Elyas, 2020). In this respect, researchers have been paying more attention to gender concerns in higher education for the last few years. For example, regarding the topic of gender research in higher education, many earlier studies focused on analyzing various issues involving gender disparities in promotion, tenure, faculty members' salaries, or higher education administration (Silander, Haake, & Lindberg, 2013). Another popular area of study is gender-related concerns about enrollment and recruiting of students (Severiens & ten Dam, 2012). However, very little space has been provided for the in-depth examination of the male and female deans' voices in the research of gender transitivity. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to examine gender variations in academic written discourses between male and female deans' messages in university contexts through employing the transitivity analysis system.

Thus, the use of CDA to accentuate how educational stakeholders are able to investigate written discourses better explains the power of words in texts from the point of male and female deans' messages. This highlights the significance of the current study since deans' messages can influence students' decisions to enroll in the preferred program.

## **Literature Review**

### *Critical Discourse Analysis and Transitivity Analysis System*

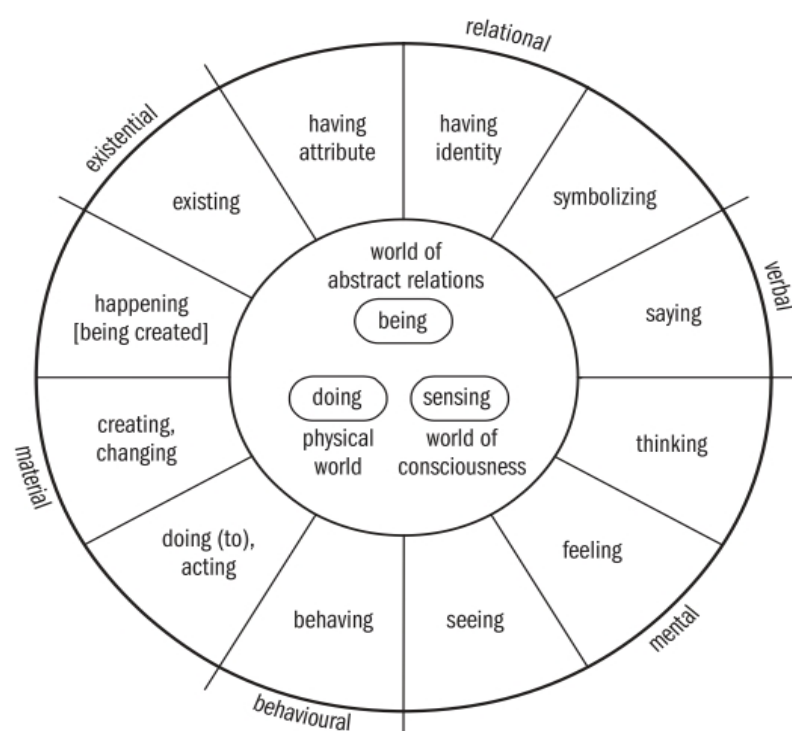
In critical discourse analysis (CDA), various ways in which people construct and provide meaning to reality are reflected by discourse. The CDA is closely associated with Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics; this theory describes linguistic options in respect of three meta-functions. It

is interesting to note that the ideational meta-function is one of these choices implemented by the transitivity system (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013). In addition, the empirical component of the clause's grammatical structure, representing the transitivity system, is contained within the ideational meta-function (Halliday & Webster, 2014). To get closer to the concept of clause from the point of view of the theory of CDA, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 83) asserted that the interpretation of the clause is "a representation of some process in ongoing human experience." Interestingly, Halliday and Webster (2014) argued that a process can cover three elements, involving experience process types, participants, and circumstances. To be more specific, Saldanha and O'Brien (2013) pointed out that in the English language, process types are described by verbal clusters, circumstances are highlighted by adverbial clusters, and participants are expressed by nominal categories.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), the transitivity system interprets the world of experience, using a manageable number of different process kinds. Specifically, as illustrated in figure 1., six main types are distinguished by transitivity. These types include mental (referring to perception, emotion, and cognition), verbal (referring to clauses of saying), material (referring to clauses of doing and happening), relational (referring to clauses of having and being), existential (referring to clauses describing something that exists), and behavioral (referring to clauses representing the behavior of participants).

**Figure 1**

*The Grammar of Experience: Types of Processes in English (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004)*



It should be noted that mental, material, and relational processes are considered major types, whereas verbal, existential, and behavioural processes are described as minor ones. Explicitly, the material process has two main participants, namely the actor and goal. Table 1. shows an example of material process type.

**Table 1***Material Process in a Clause*

Actor	Material Process		
The fish	couldn't move	any longer	in the sea

The mental process consists of a sensor and a phenomenon; both represent its main participants as illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2***Mental Process in a Clause*

Sensor	Mental Process	Phenomenon
Susan	loves	John's wealth

As for the relational process, its clauses can be categorized into attributive and identifying; the attributive process has the carrier and attribute ones. Nevertheless, two key participants characterized as token and value represent the identifying process (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). To clarify this process type, Table 3 depicts examples of relational clauses.

**Table 3***Basic Kinds of Relational Clauses*

	Attributive 'y is an Attribute of x'	Identifying 'y is the Identity of x'
Intensive 'x is y'	Ali is clever	Ali is the cleverest here
Possessive 'x has y'	Lina has a doll	The doll is Lina's
Circumstantial 'x is on/at y'	The social event is on Monday	Tomorrow is the 19th

With respect to the minor processes, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) pointed out that these processes are placed between the major processes in such order that is "behavioral at the boundary between material and mental, verbal at the boundary between mental and relational, and existential at the boundary between relational and material" (P. 300). It is important that the behavioral process is associated with psychological and physiological conducts like staring and dreaming. Table 4 shows an example of the behavioral process in a clause.

**Table 4***Behavioral Process in a Clause*

Behaver	Behavioral Process
She	is smiling

The verbal process has two main participants represented as the receiver and verbiage. It expresses activities, such as telling and asking information. An example of this process is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5***Verbal Process in a Clause*

Sayer	Verbal Process	Verbiage
She	said	“He has one chance to win”

In the existential process, the existent itself is only addressed as the participant (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Such a process demonstrates that something happens or exists. Table 6 shows an example of this process type.

**Table 6***Existential Process in a Clause*

Existential Process	Existent
There was	a cat with her 5 kittens

*Related Studies on Transitivity Analysis of Gender Variation*

Since the transitivity system is able to delve into hidden implications, it has been utilized as an effective tool by most scholars to examine literary texts, pertaining to education, politics, health, and other fields. In a recent study, for instance, Alhums and Alsaedi (2023) examined two views of female and male political columnists through using transitivity analysis theory. Both researchers employed Halliday's theory of transitivity analysis of process types. In both articles, the findings showed that both male and female political columnists frequently employed the material process, which in turn greatly influenced the discourse. Additionally, their study revealed that the differences in gender significantly have no effect with respect to recurrence of transitivity process types.

Moreover, gender disparities and similarities in political discourse have been examined using transitivity analysis (Hassan, 2021). In her study, Zhang (2017) compared the strategies Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton utilized in the first television debate using transitivity analysis. The findings indicate that for both candidates, the material process is predominant. It is followed in Hillary's speech by relational and mental processes, and in Trump's speech by existential and relational processes.

Remarkably, gender is essentially embodied in discourse and discernible through linguistic usage. Hence, it is critical to view language through the perspective of systemic functional linguistics in order to understand the association between language and gender (Emilia, Moecharom, & Syifa, 2017) within the context of universities. This section therefore emphasizes related studies on gender variations within university settings. For example, in a very recent study, Kelley, Craig, and Curtis (2023) explored gender issues as they have been experienced, told, relived, and retold by three women who have worked in public education and higher education environments. As women, they occasionally found themselves in circumstances where they were viewed, understood, and treated differently than men. The researchers also examined the early, mid, and current career obstacles faced by female educators in their respective fields of expertise. Using narrative approaches, their study explored the past, present, and future through processes of introspection on both an individual and a group level. They concluded that the fundamental goal of their paper is to comprehend how gender influences women's working lives. Nevertheless, it is critical to note that the focus of their study was on females, given that their work ignored male educators' role within higher educational institutions.

In a literature review study, Cama, Jorge, and Peña (2016) highlighted gender issues published from 2000 to 2013 within the context of universities. The researchers contended that more gender parity between men and women in higher educational institutions has been advocated by numerous research studies. They found that little is known about research tackling gender disparities among university faculty professors.

In an analysis of the news relating to health discourse posted on the Saudi Ministry of Health website by employing the theory of transitivity introduced by Halliday and Webster (2014), Alhums and Alshagrawi (2022) examined health recommendations and awareness-raising campaigns for the sake of protecting against the novel coronavirus. The results revealed that the material process type has been the dominant compared to the other process types. In the same vein, before and during the coronavirus pandemic, Alhums, Suliman, Sendi, and Alshaye (2021) compared two written discourses highlighting safe procedures in an educational context posted on the Saudi Electronic University website. Their study adopted qualitative and quantitative methodology to analyze the transitivity process types of both articles introduced on the website. The findings showed that the most prevalent process in both articles is the material process type.

All in all, although there are adequate works on gender parity and gender and communication in the workplace, very little is known about the language and gender familiarity among professors at higher educational institutions. Specifically, little research has compared the discourse patterns of male and female professors (Myrick, 2019). Thus, this paper aims at examining gender variations in academic written discourses between male and female deans' messages in university contexts through employing the transitivity analysis system. To attain the above objective, this research article tries to answer the following research questions:

1. Based on transitivity theory, what are the process types that have been often used in male and female deans' messages in university contexts?
2. Is there a substantial impact of gender variations on the transitivity prevalence of process categories employed by male and female deans' messages?

## **Methodology**

### *Research Design and Procedure*

This research used qualitative and quantitative approaches to shed considerable light on the issue of gender variations in academic written discourses between male and female deans' messages in university contexts. Sutton and Austin (2015) noted that researchers can gain a better understanding of the processes and causes behind human behavior by utilizing qualitative research methodologies. As for a quantitative research approach, it can be used to determine how many people engage in those conducts. In relation to the context of general written texts, the aim of a qualitative research approach is to conduct a thorough analysis to identify intentional meanings chosen in texts as well as types of language structures. However, the number of distinct clause types that occur in sentences can be determined through the application of quantitative research methodology (Bartley, 2018).

It is important to highlight that a text can be viewed as a piece of data that is used to study language characteristics. These qualities emphasize grammatical awareness by providing clear guidance on how to evaluate and comprehend texts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The data were obtained from two deans' messages posted on the website of their university. To investigate whether there are major differences with respect to gender variations regarding the prevalence of transitivity process categories, SPSS Version 22 was used. Employing the transitivity system, the data analysis was structured to examine gender differences in female and male deans' messages. Thus, two messages

written by a male and female dean were selected for the sake of data analysis. The first message represented the female dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, and the other one represented the male dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology. It is interesting to highlight that both messages were posted on the official website of their university. For reliability and validity purposes, the research tool represented by two deans' messages was homogeneous; both male and female professors are deans of two different faculties, approximately having the same number of departments at the same university. On their university's website, female and male deans have provided full descriptions to their faculties and their departments. In addition, both deans' messages involved quite similar purposes, objectives, and issues. In response to ethical issues, permission to use the deans' messages has been approved.

To determine the number of transitivity categories employed, both deans' messages were split into clauses for the data analysis procedure. For this research, the transitivity pattern provided by Halliday and Webster (2014) was used to classify the clauses into their related groups. Table 7 depicts the transitivity system, expressing transitivity process types, roles of participants, and circumstances.

**Table 7**

*Process Categories, Roles of Participants, and Circumstances*

Process Categories	Roles of Participants	Circumstances
Material	Actor + Goal	Extent
Mental	Senser + Phenomenon	Location (time, place)
Verbal	Sayer + Target	Manner
Relational	Carrier + Attribute	Cause Accompaniment Matter
Existential	Existent	
Behavioral	Behaver	

### Findings

#### *Female Dean's Message*

The female dean's message has been placed on the official website of her university. It has been found that three transitivity process types have been identified in the female dean's message. These types involved material, mental, and relational processes, as demonstrated in Table 8.

**Table 8**

*Process Types Distribution in Female Dean's Message*

Process Types	Frequencies	Percentage
Material	24	80 %
Mental	3	10 %
Relational	3	10 %
Total	30	100 %

Specifically, Table 8 expresses the allocation of process types; the material process type has been significantly used in comparison with the other process types (80%). The mental and relational processes acquire the same percentage (10%). In a word, three process types have been involved in the message provided by the female dean.

It is noteworthy to remark that Table 9 depicts the entire process types related to transitivity

analysis employed in the female dean's message. Interestingly, the material process has been featured as the most prevalent process type adopted in the message of the dean. Moreover, the findings revealed that the mental and relational processes received minimal attention since they share the same percentage (10%). To be more specific, three verbs representing the mental process involve 'inspire' and 'comprehending (2)'. The other three verbs involving 'include', 'is', and 'needed' represent the relational process. However, the female dean's message marks the absence of the other process categories such as verbal, behavioral, and existential processes.

**Table 9**

*Transitivity Analysis of Process Types Employed in the Female Dean's Message*

Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance
Actor (it)	Material (gives)	Goal (me)	
Actor (social sciences)	Material (welcome)	Goal (you)	
	Material (play)	Goal (a critical role)	
Actor (Our interdisciplinary approach)	Material (addressing)	Goal (the intricacies)	
	Material (merges)	Goal (exploration)	
Actor (the social, cultural, economic and political influences)	Material (nurturing)	Goal (a profound understanding)	
	Material (shape)	Goal (our world)	
Actor (we)	Material (strive)		
Actor (we)	Material (empower)	Goal (our students)	
	Material (merge)		
	Material (armed)		
	Material (affect)	Goal (change)	
	Material (aim)		
Actor (education)	Material (are prepared)	Goal (a wave of thinkers)	
	Material (confront)	Goal (global challenges)	
	Material (come join)	Goal (us)	
	Material (delving into)	Goal (the fabric of society)	
	Material (goes)		
Actor (your individual narrative)	Material (serves)		
	Material (making)	Goal (a positive impact)	
	Material (step into)	Goal (community)	
	Material (enriches)	Goal (our collective journey)	
Actor (studying social sciences)	Material (opens)	Goal (pathways)	
	Material (reshaping)	Goal (our surroundings)	
Senser (we)	Mental (comprehending)	Phenomenon (the intricacies)	
	Mental (inspire)	Phenomenon (a wave of thinkers)	
	Mental (comprehending)	Phenomenon (our surroundings.)	
Identified (our dynamic and progressive community)	Relational (includes)	Identifier (the departments of Sociology)	
Identified (Central to our mission)	Relational (is)	Identifier (the belief)	
	Relational (needed)	Possessed (the knowledge and skills)	



### *Male Dean's Message*

The male dean's message has been issued on the official website of his university. Unlike the transitivity analysis related to process categories offered in the female dean's message, there are only two transitivity process categories recognized in the male dean's message. These two transitivity patterns include material and relational processes as expressed in Table 10.

**Table 10**

#### *Process Types Distribution in Male Dean's Message*

Process Types	Frequencies	Percentage
Material	11	73 %
Relational	4	27 %
Total	15	100 %

As displayed in Table 10, the material process type (73%) has been significantly employed; this indicates that this specific process type is more frequent than the other process type, marking as the relational process type (27%). This means that only two process types have been involved in the message provided by the male dean. To clarify the nature of the transitivity analysis, Table 11 demonstrates process types of the analysis employed in the male dean's message. It has been found that the material process has been more prevalent than the relational one when comparing the two process types adopted in the male dean's message. Conversely, the male dean's message marks the absence of the other four critical process categories, such as verbal, mental, behavioral, and existential processes.

**Table 11**

#### *Transitivity Analysis of Process Types Employed in the Male Dean's Message*

Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance
Actor (the faculty)	Material (to be known)	Goal (our vision)	
	Material (aims)	Goal (to be recognized)	
	Material (be recognized)	Goal (the faculty)	
Actor (its innovative technological solutions)	Material (improve)	Goal (the quality of individual lives and prosperity of the community)	
Actor (we)	Material (offer)	Goal (a scope of undergrad)	
Actor (world-class engineering labs and research facilities)	Material (is bolstered)	Goal (Our globally recognized research)	
Actor (Staff)	Material (focused on)	Goal (supporting excellent education and research opportunities)	
Actor (excellent education and research opportunities)	Material (get)	Goal (our students)	
Actor (The faculty)	Material (solve)	Goal (real-world problems)	
	Material (welcomes)	Goal (you)	
	Material (make)	Goal (the world)	
Carrier (our vision)	Relational (is)	Attribute (to be known for innovative, industry...)	
Identified (Our engineering programs)	Relational (be)	Identifier (to be recognized)	
	Relational (include)	Identifier (work-incorporated learning)	

Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance
Carrier (you)	Relational (become)	Attribute (the Generation-Z of engineers with UoL)	

### *The Effect of Gender on the Transitivity Prevalence of Process Types*

As demonstrated in Table 12, slight variations were checked between male and female deans' messages in relation to the prevalence of process categories of transitivity analysis, albeit the female dean's message employed material process with a higher percentage than the male dean's message. As for relational process type, it has been employed more by the male dean's message. Highlighting its presence in favor of the female dean's message, mental process type does not, however, exist in the male dean's message. Table 12 depicts the overall transitivity prevalence of gender variations in both deans' messages.

**Table 12**

### *The Transitivity Prevalence of Gender Variations*

Process Type	Female	Male
Material	80%	73%
Relational	10%	27%
Mental	10%	----
Total	100%	100%

To check the effect of gender on the transitivity prevalence of process types, the researcher used SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) (version 22) to analyze the data provided from process categories produced by both female and male deans' messages. Specifically, Independent sample t-test has been used to investigate the possibility of whether there is a considerable effect of gender on the transitivity prevalence of process types produced by female and male deans' messages. To investigate the query mentioned in the previous statement, Table 13 shows the results of the prevalence of the process types of transitivity analysis employed by female and male deans' messages by utilizing independent sample t-test. It has been found that there is no impact of gender differences on the prevalence of process types of transitivity ( $t = 0.26$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) as indicated in Table 13.

**Table 13**

### *Independent Sample T-Test Results of Prevalence of Process Types*

Process Types	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Process types produced by female dean's message	3	10.00	12.12	0.26	0.80
Process types produced by male dean's message	2	7.50	4.95		

## **Discussion**

This study has adopted the systemic functional grammar theory (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) for the purpose of examining gender differences in academic written discourses between male and female deans' messages posted on the official website of their university. To assess gender differences concerning female and male deans' messages, this paper has compared the transitivity process categories, i.e., clauses that contain verbs, between female and male deans' messages in university contexts. Interestingly, the analysis process has ascertained the transitivity process types as described by the verbs since Renkema (2004) affirmed that the role of verbs in a clause is fundamental.

In this research, gender differences in the messages posted on the website of one of the universities in Pakistan have emphasized female and male deans' views. For example, female and male deans have frequently employed material processes in their messages; this indicates that actions are needed and ought to be undertaken. Remarkably, the message produced by the female dean included three process types, whereas the message provided by the male dean involved only two process types. To get a better understanding of the transitivity analysis of process types concerning the first research question, entitled "Based on transitivity theory, what are the process types that have been often used in male and female deans' messages in university contexts?", the results revealed that three categories of processes, namely relational, mental, and material, were employed by the female dean's message, with the prevalence of material process (80%) over the other two types having equal percentages (mental (10%) and relational (10%). As for the male dean's message, only two types of processes existed, namely material and relational, and once again with the prevalence of material process type (73%) and the relational process type gains (27%). Thus, the higher percentage goes in favor of the female dean's message than the other dean's message. All in all, the material category has been characterized as the process type dominant, with a proportion of 35 examples out of the total of 45 provided in the female and male deans' messages. This implies that female and male deans' written discourses have been interested in events and actions that help communicate and declare definite information to specific audiences at their university. In an academic situation like this, the material process has greatly been employed, given that actions are needed and should be accomplished (Eggins, 2004).

It is interesting to note that the relational process occurred in both deans' messages written by female and male professors, marking the percentages (10% and 27%, respectively). Hence, both deans used such a process type to underline their descriptive academic content in a way that dramatically expresses and identifies their faculties and departments. Thus, the higher percentage goes in favor of the male dean's message with respect to the relation process. It is worth noting that the mental process type has only occurred in the female dean's message (10%). Adopting the mental process in her message emphasized the understanding and consciousness of the content of her written discourse to get the audience fully addressed.

In other words, the results disclosed that the most prevalent process employed in the female and male deans' messages is the material process type. This result was consistent with the studies conducted by Alhumsi and Alsaedi (2023) and Alhumsi et al. (2021). All these research academic papers demonstrated that the material process was the most prevalent type among other process categories.

In relation to the second question of the current research paper, entitled "Is there a substantial impact of gender variations on the transitivity prevalence of process categories employed by male and female deans' messages?", an independent sample t-test was run. The results showed that there is no effect of gender differences on transitivity prevalence of process categories employed by male and female deans' messages ( $t = 0.26$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This result is consistent with Alhumsi and Alsaedi (2023) and Alhumsi (2017). For instance, Alhumsi and Alsaedi (2023) did not substantially find an effect of gender between women and men participants and their written discourses. It is important that using independent sample t-test to identify the gender variations has not so far been deployed (Alhumsi & Alsaedi, 2023).

## Conclusion and Further Studies

This research adopted the transitivity theory to gain a deeper understanding of investigating and analyzing transitivity process types to find out gender differences in academic written discourses between female and male deans' messages posted at the deans' university official website. By examining the verbs in the clauses, a comparison of the various transitivity process categories has been conducted in order to evaluate gender differences in academic written discourses between female and male deans' messages. It is noteworthy that Halliday and Webster (2014) confirmed that the verb choice in a clause affects both the type of process being described and the role of the participants. The former statement reflects the results; it has been found that the material process has been the most prevalent category in both deans' messages, representing a percentage of (80%) in favor of female dean compared to a percentage of (73%) in favor of male dean. Furthermore, the relational process ranks second, with a higher percentage (27%) recorded for the advantage of the male dean, whereas a percentage (10%) recorded in favor of the female dean. It is critical that the female dean's message has been distinguished by the existence of the mental process type (10%).

The approximate scale of percentages implies the meticulous and relevant selection of the clauses in both female and male deans for conveying the theme of their messages. Such a close scale unequivocally signifies an overview of the overall introduction to their university in general and the faculty and its departments in particular. Thus, despite the absence of the other three process types, the findings revealed that the three process types, namely mental, material, and mental, in both deans' messages have been described in a noteworthy structure.

Compared to previous research, this study essentially and considerably assesses gender differences by using independent sample t-test to investigate whether there is a substantial effect of gender on the prevalence of transitivity process categories occurring in both female and male deans' messages. The result of the current paper disclosed an insignificant effect of gender variations on the prevalence of transitivity process categories.

Addressing the written academic discourse produced by two male and female deans' messages posted on the website of their university could be considered a limitation, identifying the small size of the sample adopted in the current study. Another limitation is that this study did not address the other components of transitivity theory, namely the role of participants and the circumstances. Nevertheless, further research could offer more insight into these essential components. Conducting interviews may incorporate the perspectives or intentions of the deans, which could provide a richer understanding of the discourse patterns observed. Besides, investigating more academic documents within university settings, such as a word from the university president, professors' speeches in virtual classes, and course syllabuses, potentially serves as motivation for other scholars.

## Acknowledgements

The author is thankful to both Pakistani male and female university deans for their cooperation and kindness.

This research is in compliance with ethical standards.

## Conflict of Interest

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## References

- Akingbade, R., Olusegun, A., & Bamidele, E. (2022). Gender neutral language use among university lecturers: Gender differences in institutions with and without gender mainstreaming policies. *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies*, 7(3), 129-150. <https://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejsss.v7i3.1247>
- Alhumsi, M. (2017). *The effect of phonemic segmentation on word recognition through the use of interactive whiteboard among Jordanian English as a foreign language (EFL) beginning readers* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia.
- Alhumsi, M., & Alsaedi, N. (2023). A transitivity analysis of two political articles: An investigation of gender variations in political media discourse. *World Journal of English Language*, 13(6), 107–118. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v13n6p107>
- Alhumsi, M., & Alshagrawi, S. (2022). Transitivity analysis of news texts on the Saudi ministry of health website: An investigation of health guidelines during COVID-19. *International Journal of Advanced and Applied Sciences*, 9(9), 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.21833/ijaas.2022.09.002>
- Alhumsi, M., Suliman, E., Sendi, K., & Alshaye, R. (2021). Transitivity analysis of university news texts during the coronavirus pandemic: Transitivity analysis of university news texts. *Argentinian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(2), 2314-3576.
- Bartley, L. (2018). Justice demands that you find this man not guilty: A transitivity analysis of the closing arguments of a rape case that resulted in a wrongful conviction. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 28(3), 480-495. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12227>
- Brinia, V., Selimi, P., Dimos, A., & Kondea, A. (2022). The impact of communication on the effectiveness of educational organizations. *Education Sciences*, 12(3), 170. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12030170>
- Cama, M., Jorge, M., & Peña, F. (2016). Gender differences between faculty members in higher education: A literature review of selected higher education journals. *Educational Research Review*, 18, 58-69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2016.03.001>
- Eggins, S. (2004). *Introduction to systemic functional linguistics*. London: A&C Black.
- Emilia, E., Moecharam, N., & Syifa, I. (2017). Gender in EFL classroom: Transitivity analysis in English textbook for Indonesian students. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(1), 206-214. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v7i1.6877>
- Halliday, M., & Matthiessen, C. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203783771>
- Halliday, M. & Matthiessen, C. (2013). *An introduction to functional grammar* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203783771>
- Halliday, M., & Matthiessen, C. (2014). *Halliday's introduction to Functional Grammar* (4th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Halliday, M. & Webster, J. (2014). *Text linguistics: The how and why of meaning*. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing Ltd.

- Hassan, D. K. (2021). A critical discourse analysis of transitivity variation between genders in selected public political speeches: A corpus-based study. *Buhuth Journal*, 1(2), 1–60. <https://doi.org/10.21608/buhuth.2021.56896.1033>
- Kelley, M., Craig, C., & Curtis, G. (2023). Examining gender issues in education: Exploring confounding experiences on three female educators' professional knowledge landscapes. *Frontiers in Education*, 8, 1162523. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1162523>
- Myrick, C. (2019). *Language and gender ideologies in higher education: An examination of faculty discourses* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). North Carolina State University, North Carolina. Retrieved from <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/resolver/1840.20/36471>
- Renkema, J. (2004). *Introduction to discourse studies*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1075/z.124>
- Rezaee, M., Aghagolzadeh, F., & Birjandi, P. (2015). The effect of lecturers' gender on the use of discourse markers. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, 4(2), 69-87. <https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrsl.2014.900>
- Saldanha, G., & O'Brien, S. (2013). *Research methodologies in translation studies* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315760100>
- Salsabila, I., Umam, A., Nurjanah, A., Wahyuningsih, O., & Lestari, A. (2024). The role of gender in language and communication: A linguistic perspective. *Eduvest-Journal of Universal Studies*, 4(1), 260-269. <https://doi.org/10.59188/eduvest.v4i1.1061>
- Severiens, S., ten Dam, G. (2012). Leaving college: A gender comparison in male and female-dominated programs. *Research in Higher Education*, 53, 453–470. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-011-9237-0>
- Sianturi, K., & Megasari, A. (2023). The effectiveness of communication messages in politics. *Journal of Social Research*, 2(11), 3988-3996. <https://doi.org/10.55324/josr.v2i11.1536>
- Silander, C., Haake, U. & Lindberg, L. (2013) The different worlds of academia: A horizontal analysis of gender equality in Swedish higher education. *Higher Education*, 66, 173–188. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-012-9597-1>
- Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: Data collection, analysis, and management. *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*, 68(3). <https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456>
- Widodo, H. & Elyas, T. (2020). Introduction to gender in language education. *Sexuality & Culture*, 24(4), 1019-1027. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-020-09753-1>
- Yule, G. (2006). *The study of language* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yule, G. (2014). *The study of language* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Zhang, Y. (2017). Transitivity analysis of Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's first television debate. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 6(7), 65-72. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.6n.7p.65>