



**IDENTIFYING THE MEANING OF LOVE THROUGH
TRANSITIVITY IN *WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK
ABOUT LOVE* SHORT STORY BY RAYMOND CARVER**

A THESIS

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
S-1 Degree Majoring Linguistics in the English Department
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The author ensures that this thesis is written by herself without taking any works from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, or in diploma degree of any university. She certifies also that the data and materials in this thesis are not a copy of someone's publications or works except the references mentioned later.

Bandung, 11th August 2021

Deta Russita

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

Success in life is not for those who run fast, but for those who keep running and always on the move.

Bangambiki Habyarimana

This thesis is specifically dedicated to my mom, my dad, and my brother. Also, not to forget, to all of my best of friends and most importantly to myself.

APPROVAL

**IDENTIFYING THE MEANING OF LOVE THROUGH TRANSITIVITY
IN *WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT LOVE* SHORT
STORY BY RAYMOND CARVER**

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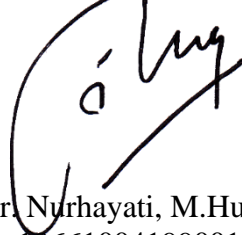
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I acknowledge that this thesis is far from perfection. Suggestions and criticism will be gladly accepted to make this thesis better. I expect this thesis will be beneficial for the readers.

Bandung, 11th August 2021

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ABSTRACT

This study is an analysis of the meaning of love in a short story entitled *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* by Raymond Carver. The purpose is to discover the meaning of love in the short story. The author uses Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory focusing on the transitivity concept to conduct the analysis. Close reading and referential methodology are used to complete the analysis. Eventually, the author finds that love in the short story has many meanings. The analysis shows that material processes dominate the data. It concludes that love is majorly defined as physical actions. In this matter, expressing love can be as extreme as killing the person that the characters love or as simple as holding hands. The meaning of love in the short story is also expressed through other processes namely mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential processes. Each process describes love as feelings perceived by the characters, the act of caring towards someone that the characters love, the character's willingness to die to prove their love, the way the characters say "*I love you*" to someone they love, and an existent specifically in an event when Ed tries to kill Terri.

Keywords: transitivity analysis; ideational meaning; short story; love

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Broadly known as linguistics, the study of language sometimes only refers to its grammatical aspects such as phonology, morphology, syntax, or semantics for many people in general (Fairclough, 2013: 5). Yet language has been proven to be an essential aspect of human life. However, the term *language* here is still spinning around as an abstract system rather than an actual representation of language use. It generally neglects its relationship with meanings portrayed within its components as an important part of language use.

A language study would be better if it includes the analysis between language and meanings portrayed in its components as the core of the study. The theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) may cover this type of language study. Halliday (2014: 3) describes SFL as the study of language which deals with how meanings in a language are constructed through and based on its grammatical aspects.

This present study will cover a study of a short story entitled *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* written by Raymond Carver. It will be based on the theory of SFL specifically transitivity delivered by mainly Halliday and also

Eggins. Furthermore, the main purpose of this study is to discover a clearer definition of love in the selected short story.

The short story itself is published in 1981 by the American writer and included in a story collection by himself of the same title. It mainly talks about the idea of love that revolves around the four main characters in the short story namely Mel, Terri, Nick (the narrator of the story), and Laura. One of the interesting parts to analyze the story is how it constructed the meaning of love for each main character, which eventually they have no clear idea about.

The story shows how the four main characters discussing love in general while drinking gin. Each of them eventually has their own opinions about love. In the storyline, Mel and Terri (who are married to each other) argue about their views on love. While Nick and Laura (who are also married to each other) submissively contribute to the discussion. In the end, they have no particular conclusion about love while it is all they talked about.

Similar studies related to the theory used, in particular transitivity, are generally compelling to be conducted. The author also finds it interesting since it can be proven that the grammatical aspects of a language can be one of the best aspects to discover the idea or meaning behind the language itself.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the subjects stated previously, these questions arise:

- 1.2.1 How does love is described through transitivity in the selected short story?
- 1.2.2 What is the most frequent transitivity process that is constructed the meaning of love in the selected short story?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on what is mentioned in the Research Problems above, these objectives are constructed:

- 1.3.1 To discover the meaning of love through transitivity in the selected short story.
- 1.3.2 To discover the most frequent transitivity process that is constructed the meaning of love in the selected short story.

1.4 Previous Studies

Previous studies related to *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* short story are relatively limited to be found.

Some researchers are preferably conducting a study of two or more or even simply all Carver's works overall. Some others are preferably analyzing two or more, or even all of Carver's works of the book with the same title. Moreover, only

a few studies analyze one of his works specifically of the short story *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*.

As stated above, some researchers are likely conducting a study of two or more, or all Carver's works in general as a study entitled *An Interview with Raymond Carver* conducted by Larry McCaffery and Sinda Gregory (1985). The study covers an overview of all Carver's works in general, including the short story in question, from Carver's point of view. Although the object of this study is all Carver's works, the study can provide a clear overview of the story in question in the eyes of Carver as the writer himself.

The study discovers that most stories written by Carver build upon small things experienced by ordinary people that are eventually meant not as small or simple as they look—they are indeed impactful. In *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* alone, Carver specifically writes the narratives just as enough description and interpretation as it could be and still meaningful.

Another example is a study entitled *Raymond Carver and the Menace of Minimalism* conducted by Mark A. R. Facknitz (1989) dealing with Carver's writing style in most of his works. From this study, the reader can identify that Carver usually uses minimalism in a lot of his works. The study also states that Carver is known as one of the contemporary writers using minimalism in his writings. As the result, characters from the stories—especially stories from *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*—are considered too concise in which their talks are unclear and even fail to communicate with other characters in the

stories. The study concludes that the use of minimalism in a lot of Carver's works gives his stories lack meaning only if the reader is not willing to fill the void.

The next example is a study conducted by Kirk Nessel (1991) titled *This Word Love: Sexual Politics and Silence in Early Raymond Carver*. The study generally deals with love as one of the most prevalent themes in many works of Carver's early career including stories from *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*. It concludes that the stories describe love as what the title may describe: *marriage, disloyalty*, and everything in between.

There is also a study by Jon Powell (1994) titled *The Stories of Raymond Carver: The Menace of Perpetual Uncertainty* analyzing many Carver's works in terms of uncertainty in its narratives. The study discovers Carver values the sense of uncertainty as something necessary in his works. In *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, the uncertainty can be seen from the characters' conversations about love. This study confirms in the end that readers can assume that most of Carver's characters are struggling with the language they use as a medium of communication which eventually only confuses them.

It is also stated before that apart from analyzing most of Carver's literary works, some other researchers are likely conducting a study of two or even all of the stories in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*.

The first example is a study entitled *Fiction Chronicle: January to June, 1981* conducted by Thomas LeClair (1982) indicating stories in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* as a representation of contemporary literature

published on January until June of 1981. It also indicates that stories in the book, including the one with the same title, are considered as particular literature consisting of simple narratives of all contemporary literature published in the same year. Its linguistic features contain also simple variations with minimal metaphor or such. Carver himself names it as precise even flat. He also states that although the linguistic features remain flat, it is still able to carry deep meanings within.

The second example is a study by Marshall Bruce Gentry (1993) entitled *Women's Voices in Stories by Raymond Carver* focusing on women's representation portrayed through cross-gender writing in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* stories. The study finds that the stories, specifically *The Bath* and *I Could See The Smallest Things*, are included in the list of stories from Carver describing that women are stronger and more emotional than men are. It also concludes that Carver is one of the contemporary writers having the sympathy of opposite gender whenever they write cross-gender fiction.

The third example will include a study by Margaret J. Downes (1996) entitled *Narrativity, Myth, and Metaphor: Louise Erdrich and Raymond Carver Talk about Love* focusing on the theme of love in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* stories. It discovers that the mentioned stories are describing love as a tragedy between people who are lost in the idea of love itself. The study also mentions that the title of the book describes the content itself: an unfinished statement about love. Other than that, it is also comparing the stories to Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* which concludes that the theme of love by Carver is

classified as despair rather than blessing different from what is captured through Erdrich's.

The fourth example is a study by Peggy Ozaki (2000) entitled *An Analysis of Raymond Carver's "Glimpse" Aesthetic in His Collection of Short Stories, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love"*. The study analyzes three of Carver's stories in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* namely *Viewfinder*, and *A Serious Talk*, also the story of the same title. It concludes all of the three stories' main characters are surviving with the idealistic concept of love and marriage. That in the end, they are unable to find the meaning of love. In *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* alone, Carver captures Mel's "glimpse" of life as ways he tries to understand the meaning of love. Mel eventually fails to understand its complex meaning by having misconceptions about it and blur its sense of importance.

The last example is a study conducted by Anna Garcia (2013) entitled *But There Was No Way of Telling: Silence, Stasis, and Multiplicity in Raymond Carver's "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love"*. The study mainly deals with Carver's writing style which causes chaos of stories in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*. It discovers that as his minimalistic writing peak in the mentioned book, limitations toward many aspects such as form, theme, genre are arising. Those limitations make the characters in his stories considered overwhelmed and often traumatized (caused from the silence, stasis, and

multiplicity). The study concludes that of all of the stories in the book, the story with the same title possesses the most number of multiplicities.

Whilst most researchers are presumably conducting a study of two or even all of Carver's works, there is a study that particularly focusing only on the short story *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*. This study is conducted by M Gómez Galisteo (2011) entitled *What Men and Women Do When They Talk About Love: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love" by Raymond Carver*. It covers a sociolinguistics study and discovers that there are differences on how men and women are talking about love in the mentioned short story. Men tend to be controlling, preventing the other party who are women, to contribute more to the conversation. This behavior of men caused women to be in a subordinate position to men. Women also often struggle to have their voice be heard by men. This study concludes that the limitation of language used by women in the short story successfully portray how men and women especially married couple, dealing with verbal interaction in most of American societies.

A study of transitivity to discover the meaning of love specifically in the selected short story has not been done yet of all related studies explained by the author above. Thus a depth analysis of how transitivity constructed the meaning of love in the short story will be provided in this present study. Moreover, this study will fill the gap between researchers by conducting a specific study on only one of Carver's works.

In addition, it is also discovered that many transitivity studies dealing with ideational meaning similar to what have conducted by Asad Mehmood, Roshan Amber, Sobia Ameer, and Rabia Faiz (2014) entitled *Transitivity Analysis: Representation of Love in Wilde's "The Nightingale and The Rose"* are rarely explaining the initial purpose of the study (in this case the representation, the meaning of love) by choice explain only the transitivity processes included in the selected text and proceed to interpret the analyzed data from the text. This present study will not only provide interpretation of the data but will also include how contextually the data constructed the ideational meaning in question.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focuses generally on the SFL theory and specifically on the concept of transitivity. The analysis limits on only discovering the meaning of love in the selected short story by Carver. The data includes only particular clauses which are constructed the representation of love in the short story. It discovers how love is constructed in the short story and which process is dominating the transitivity system in the analysis.

1.6 Writing Organization

This study consists of four chapters and is divided into sub-chapters that will be classified as follows.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION. This chapter consists of sub-chapters which include: 1) Background of The Study, 2) Research Problem, 3) Objective of The Study, 4) Previous Studies, 5) Scope of The Study, and 6) Writing Organization of the study. It describes an overall view of how the study is constructed.

CHAPTER II: THEORY AND METHOD. This chapter covers sub-chapters which include: 1) Theory, and also 2) Method of the study. It describes the theory of SFL specifically transitivity also close reading and referential methodology used by the author to conduct the study.

CHAPTER III: RESULT AND DISCUSSION. This chapter consists of sub-chapters which cover: 1) Result, and also 2) Discussion of the analysis. It provides the reader an overview and a depth explanation of the result of the conducted analysis.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION. This chapter concludes the explanation and discussion of the conducted analysis as explained in the previous chapter. It covers a concise description of how the study is accomplished.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

This chapter explains theory and method used to complete this study. It is divided into two sub-chapters. The first chapter covers the main theory used for this study which is SFL in general and transitivity in detail. While the second chapter gives the reader an overview of how the study is accomplished. It covers the research type, data, population, and sampling technique, also method in collecting and analyzing the data.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

As stated above, this study mainly uses the SFL theory and particularly of transitivity. The theory is derived from the fourth edition of *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* book theory by Michael Halliday. It is also derived from the second edition of *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics* book written by Suzzane Eggins to provide a more detailed theory.

2.1.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is the study of language as a function based on its structure. A study of language can be done by analyzing particular text. The

term *text* here refers to any language from any medium that makes meaning to someone who understands the language (Halliday & Hasan, 2014: 3).

Halliday (2014: 3) offers two aspects in analyzing a particular text: text as an object and; text as a tool for discovering something else. These two aspects can not be separated from one to another. In this case, the reader can not clearly distinguish why a text means what it does without linking it to its linguistics element as a whole and vice versa. He specifically explains that the linguistics element here refers to the grammar pattern of the text as an entire. Various grammatical patterns will also represent various meanings of the text.

SFL theory views language as a comprehensive system. It outlines that every aspect of a language represents the whole context in it. Additionally, any aspect in a grammatical element of a language contributes in constructing the whole idea or picture in it including in a literary text.

2.1.1.1 Clause Metafunction

Clauses based on Halliday (2014: 83) have three lines of meaning which including textual, interpersonal, and also experiential. These three lines of meaning often refer to the term clause metafunction. The only metafunction that will be used in this study is the experiential one which covers clause as representation.

Halliday (2014: 212) describes the experiential or ideational metafunction as an analysis of clause as representation through a flow of events which include

participants and circumstances involved in the portrayed events. It considers as a system named *transitivity*.

2.1.1.2 Transitivity

A transitivity system consists of an element of process, participants, and may or may not be of circumstances. Eggins (2004: 214) states that in analyzing a system of transitivity in a clause, three aspects needed to be concerned: the selection of process which covers verbal elements; the selection of participant which covers nominal elements; and the selection of circumstance which covers adverbial elements or prepositional phrases.

As stated previously, Halliday describes the concept of transitivity as a system consisting of ongoing events, participants involved in the events, and circumstances. Thence, the ongoing events here are centered on an element of process of the transitivity system. There are sets of processes type. Halliday also states that each process type represents particular events or goings-on and will surely involve at least one participant (2014: 213). The sets will be categorized and described as follows.

The major types of processes are material, mental, and relational. Additionally, there are also 3 more processes located on the borderline of the three main processes: behavioral (borderline between material and mental); verbal (borderline between mental and relational), and; existential (borderline between

relational and material). These three additional processes share particular same features of certain major process but also have their own characteristics.

Material processes are the type of process that dealing with a way of doing which is usually containing physical activity. An actor may undertake some actions which influenced the other entity in this type of process. At least one (the *actor*) or two (the *goal*, *scope*, *attribute*, *client*, or *recipient*) kinds of participant are needed to be involved here. Mental processes are the type of process that usually portray mental activity such as feeling, thought, or perception of the *senser*. It declares and gives vision into someone's consciousness and how they preserve their reality. As many as two participants (the *senser* and *phenomenon*) are needed to be involved here. Relational processes are the type of process that encodes the relationship of being, becoming, or having from an entity to the other entity. It is divided into two which include identifying and attributive relational process. Identifying relational processes aim to define a participant (the *token*) being an identity of the other participant (the *value*) and the other way around. Whilst attributive relational processes aim to attribute a quality of a participant (the *attribute*) being a part of the other entity (the *carrier*). This type of process including its types obligates two participants to be included.

In between material and mental processes are behavioral processes. It covers the outer expression as a result of inner body tasks and reflects physiological and psychological behaviors. It usually only involves one participant (the *behaber*) in the element. Secondly, in between mental and relational processes are verbal

processes that dealing with the activity of saying or mentioning which is done verbally. At least two (the *sayer* and *verbiage*) or three participants (the *receiver*) are involved in this type of process. Lastly, in between relational and material processes are existential processes that cover states of being, existing, or happening which only includes one participant (the *existent*) in the element.

The following table 2.1 below will summarize all types of processes as mentioned above including its element of participants which are inseparable.

Table 2.1 Types of Process and Its Participants

Types of Process	Types of Participant
1. Material	actor, goal, recipient, attribute, scope, client
1 & 2. Behavioral	behave, behavior
2. Mental	senser, phenomenon
2 & 3. Verbal	sayer, receiver, verbiage
3. Relational	token/value, carrier/attribute
3 & 1. Existential	existent

Besides the element of process and participant which are always attached to each other, the element of circumstances should also be considered in analyzing a transitivity system of a certain clause. It will present the details of the events portrayed through the element of process and participant in a clause such as details about when, where, how, etc. Halliday (2014: 313) classifies the element of circumstance into nine main types which will be presented in the following table 2.2 next page.

Table 2.2 Types of Circumstance

Type		Questioned by
1. Extent	distance	<i>how far?</i>
	duration	<i>how long?</i>
	frequency	<i>how many times?</i>
2. Location	place	<i>where?</i>
	time	<i>when?</i>
3. Manner	means	<i>how?</i>
	quality	<i>how?</i>
	comparison	<i>how? what like?</i>
	degree	<i>how much?</i>
4. Cause	reason	<i>why?</i>
	purpose	<i>why? what for?</i>
	behalf	<i>who for?</i>
5. Contingency	condition	<i>why?</i>
	default	-
	concession	-
6. Accompaniment	comitative	<i>who/what with?</i>
	additive	<i>and who/what else</i>
7. Role	guise	<i>what as?</i>
	product	<i>what into?</i>
8. Matter	-	<i>what about?</i>
9. Angle	source	-
	viewpoint	-

In using the theory of SFL to conduct a transitivity analysis, the three elements of a transitivity system must be considered as explained in the above

description. In this case, each element which includes participant, process, and (not obligatory) circumstance plays a particular role to later depict meanings and descriptions in a clause as a complete narrative of a certain text.

2.2 Research Method

The data, population, sample, sampling technique, also method in collecting and analyzing the data will be described in this second sub-chapter.

2.2.1 Type of Research

This study is classified into quantitative–qualitative research which aims to functionally describe the meaning of love in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* short story by Raymond Carver. Thus, the study covers two main explanations: 1) Quantitative which provides the reader specific numbers of occurrence of the analyzed data, and; 2) Qualitative which provides the reader a detailed explanation about the analyzed data.

2.2.2 Data, Population, and Sampling Technique

The data of this study are texts in mentioned the short story by Carver that is obtained online. The population of the data includes all of the clauses in the short story. Whilst the sample of the data is chosen through purposive sampling technique to later find the meaning of love in the short story. It consists of clauses derived

from the narratives of the short story which shows how the story constructed the meaning of love through its context.

2.2.3 Method of Collecting Data

This study uses close reading methodology to collect the data. This type of methodology supports the analyst to see and read texts as a whole in delivering their meanings and purposes carefully (Richards, 2014: 205). Thence, the data is collected during the close reading activity by the author and by taking notes manually throughout the texts. It is done until the data is considered accurate and meets the needs of this study. As stated above, the data will include all clauses that are constructed the meaning of love in the short story contextually.

2.2.4 Method of Analyzing Data

Referential (*Pilah Unsur Penentu (PUP)*) methodology is used to analyze the data in this study. By using this type of methodology, the author is able to look at the text particularly based on its linguistic features and its reality. Sudaryanto (2015: 27) states that referential methodology supports the analyst to discover how the linguistic features will also refer to its reality through their eyes. The term *reality* here refers to things, actions, characters, conditions, or amounts in real life.

To describe in detail, the author follows steps as mentioned below:

1. Categorizing the collected data into three groups namely *Love According to Terri*, *Love According to Mel*, and *Love According to Nick and Laura*;
2. Calculating the data group per group based on the occurrences of each process included in the data and in total;
3. Describing the result of each group in detail in terms of context and function as depicted in the transitivity system of each of the data;
4. Summarizing the result of each group of the data and in general specifically in the concept of transitivity;
5. Concluding the meaning of love in the short story based on the transitivity analysis.

CHAPTER III

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, result as well as explanation of the conducted analysis will be provided to the reader. The author eventually discovers many meanings of love based on the concept of transitivity in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* short story by Raymond Carver through the analysis. A more detailed result and explanation will be presented as follows.

3.1 Result

The author has found 54 data related to the definition of love in the short story mentioned above. The selected data were chosen by how each character in the short story defines love shown mostly through their dialogues and also (although not many) actions in the form of clauses. From the obtained data, the author has observed and discovered that love is expressed differently by the four main characters—Mel (Dr. Melvin R. McGinnis), Terri (Teresa), Laura, and narrator of the story, Nick—in the short story.

The author also found that other than how contextually each character has different opinions of love, the ways (functionally, in terms of transitivity) they describe their ideas are also different—although not significant. This result can be

seen through the types of processes used by each character as well as the number of occurrences for each process as presented in the following table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Result of the Analysis

Character	Types of Process					
	Material	Mental	Relation -al	Behavio- ral	Verbal	Existenti -al
Terri	10 data	9 data	5 data	2 data	1 data	1 data
Mel	6 data	6 data	7 data	0 data	1 data	0 data
Nick and Laura	5 data	0 data	1 data	0 data	0 data	0 data
Total:	21 data	15 data	13 data	2 data	2 data	1 data

As presented in table 3.1 above, the meaning of love in the short story is realized through all types of processes. It can also be found that love is dominantly realized by material followed by mental and relational processes. Although not significant, the remaining processes which include behavioral, verbal, and existential processes still play certain roles to describe the meaning of love in the short story.

Through material processes, love is expressed as actions done by the character/s in the short story which can be sensed and observable physically. This idea is marked by verbs such as *dragged*, *beat*, *tried to kill*, or *couldn't see* as the process. Through mental processes, love is expressed as a feeling perceived by the character/s to the other character/s which includes almost all characters in the short

story. This result is marked by the word *love* itself as the mental processes and the word *I* (refers to Ed and Mel), *me* (refers to Terri), *you* (refers to Terri), *he* (refers to Ed), *we* (refers to the four main characters), and *Terri* (refers to herself) also the phrase *each other* (refers to the four main characters) and *my first wife* (refers to Marjorie) as the participants. Through relational processes, love is expressed as many ideas such as spiritual, crazy, or abnormal. This conclusion is marked by verbs such as *was nothing less, is, or am like* as the process which links the included participants to one another—in this case the idea of love that is marked by a word like *it* or a phrase like *the kind of love I'm talking about* as the participants of token or carrier to words such as *true, crazy, or abnormal* as the participant of value or attribute.

Meanwhile, through behavioral processes, love is expressed as a kind of behavior done by specifically the character Ed to show his love. It is realized through verbs such as *may have acted crazy* and *did die* as the processes and the word *he* which refers to Ed as the behavior. Through verbal processes, love is expressed verbally by the character/s in the short story. This result is marked through verbal processes *kept saying* and *say* as the center. Lastly, through existential process, love is expressed as an entity that exists on a certain occasion or matter in the short story. It is marked through the word *was* as the process and *there* as the circumstance which specifically refers to an event where Ed tried to kill Terri.

To sum up, the meaning of love in the short story is defined as varies and expressed differently through transitivity by the four main characters in the short story which will be explained more as follows.

3.2 Discussion

In this subchapter, the author will explain how each character in the short story defines love contextually and functionally in terms of transitivity in detail. The discussion will also show how love is constructed through transitivity.

3.2.1 Love According to Terri

Terri (or Teresa) is one of the four main characters in the short story. Alongside Mel, her husband, she dominates the conversation about love in the short story which is what the story is all about. There are 28 data regarding Terri's opinion about love in the short story. The analyzed data show that Terri describes her opinion through all types of processes namely material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential processes.

In detail, Terri describes love as what Ed did in the past for her in the name of love as specifically refers to the example below.

- (1) (...) *the man she lived with before she lived with Mel loved her so much he tried to kill her.* (Carver, 1989: 99)

The use of past tense in the mental process *loved* above marked that the event in question already happened in the past. It is also discovered that what is pictured in the example above is implied as love for Terri. The senser as marked by the clause *the man she lived with before she lived with Mel* there refers to Ed—his former boyfriend. It can also be seen from the example above that the circumstance *so much he tried to kill her* depicts the way or in this case the manner of how Ed loved her at that time—a lot in a way that he wanted her dead. This example shows that Ed does not want anyone to love Terri as much as he loves her.

The clause *he tried to kill her* in the example above can be analyzed as well to discover the definition of love by Terri. Here, Terri also explains love as a material process that includes herself (marked by *her* which refers to Terri) as the goal, and Ed (marked by *he* which refers to Ed) as the actor.

Terri later mentions what Ed did in the past by involving words and phrases such as *beat up*, *dragged*, and *went on dragging* as the process with *me* which refers to her as the goal as shown in the examples below.

(2) *He beat me up one night.* (Carver, 1989: 99)

(3) *He dragged me around the living room by my ankles.*
(Carver, 1989: 99)

(4) *He went on dragging me around the living room.*
(Carver, 1989: 99)

Note also that all the processes in the three examples above are in past tense to show that the events in question already happened. These examples portray what Ed did to Terri was beating and dragging her which both show physical actions of

the actor *Ed*. There are also additional circumstances to complete the information about when, where, and how the event happened in detail. The phrase *one night* as the circumstance describes when, *around the living room* as the circumstance describes where, and *by my ankles* as the circumstance describes how. Thus, here Terri specifically refers love as how Ed loved her to an event that happened at a certain time, around a certain place, and in a specific manner.

She also mentions how Ed expressed his love to her verbally by involving the phrase *kept saying* as the process and also the clauses ‘*I love you, I love, you bitch.*’ as the verbiage which include Ed (marked by the word *he*) as the sayer. It is presented through the example as follows.

(5) *He kept saying, ‘I love you, I love you, you bitch.’*
(Carver, 1989: 99)

The verbiage as seen above indicates that according to Terri, love is also realized as a mental process perceived by Ed (marked by the word *I* as the sensors which both refer to Ed) for her (marked by the word *you* as the phenomenon which both refer to Terri). Terri also explains how Ed almost killed her back then by involving the phrase *kept knocking* as the process, and *my head* which refers to her head as the passive actor, also *on things* as the goal.

(6) *My head kept knocking on things.* (Carver, 1989: 99)

Besides Ed also expressed his love—which is also defined as love for Terri—by trying to kill himself as portrayed in the following examples.

(7) *WHEN I left, he drank rat poison, (...)* (Carver, 1989: 100)

(8) *(...) he shot himself in the mouth.* (Carver, 1989: 100)

(9) *(...) he bungled that too.* (Carver, 1989: 100)

It is shown from the examples above that what Ed did was drink rat poison and shoot himself although he was very sloppy because of his love for Terri. The material process *drank* shows what *he* (which refers to Ed) does physically as the actor and the scope *rat poison* shows an entity that remains unaffected by the action of the actor. The material process *shot* also pictures what Ed does as the actor as well as him as the goal. Though in the end, he failed himself as marked by the material process *bungled*. The use of circumstance *WHEN I left* there specifically marked how those actions are caused by Terri (the subject *I* here refers to Terri) who left him back then. It shows that regarding losing Terri by his side, he would rather die ever since he loves her so much. Furthermore, the circumstance *in the mouth* adds information to where Ed does the actions which in this case to where he shot himself. Still, note how all the processes in the examples above are in past tense to again show that the events in question are all already happened.

Not to forget something that is off about the way Ed loves Terri for most people, she emphasizes that the events involving how Ed showed his love for her are indeed love in her opinion. She uses the pronoun *it* to refer to what Ed did as the carriers as shown in the examples below.

(10) *(...) it was, (...)* (Carver, 1989: 99)

(11) *It may sound crazy to you, (...)* (Carver, 1989: 99)

(12) (...) *it's true just the same.* (Carver, 1989: 99)

(13) *It was love, (...)* (Carver, 1989: 102)

The carriers it in the examples above relate to (marked by the use of attributive relational as the processes) ideas such as *love, crazy, true, and abnormal* as the attributes. These examples describe that what Ed did is related or close to the term *love* itself, craziness, reality, and abnormality in Terri's opinion. It shows that she acknowledges what Ed did was crazy and abnormal but to her, it happened and was still classified as love. She also specifically addresses Ed's doings back then were crazy as seen in the example below.

(14) (...) *sometimes he may have acted crazy.* (Carver, 1989: 99)

The mention of the word *sometimes* as the element of circumstance shows how many have Ed acted insane as the behavior in the data above. It concludes that he was not always insane. The reason was all because of his abundant amount of love for Terri. He may not have acted as explained earlier (wanted to kill Terri and ended up killing himself) if it is not because of his love for Terri. Terri also always mentions love as a mental process followed by *he* as the senser referring to Ed and *her* as the phenomenon referring to herself as many as 5 times as shown in the following examples.

(15) (...) *he loved me.* (Carver, 1989: 99)

(16) *In his own way maybe, but he loved me.* (Carver, 1989: 99)

(17) *He did love me (...)* (Carver, 1989: 101)

(18) *He didn't love me the way you love me.* (Carver, 1989: 101)

(19) (...) *he loved me.* (Carver, 1989: 101)

These examples above are to emphasize to everyone in the story that what Ed did was because of his love towards her. There is also additional information in two of the examples above such as *in his own way maybe* and *the way you love me* as the circumstance. It refers to how Terri describes that people are dealing with different ideas in expressing love. She thus emphasizes once again that where the event occurred love existed as depicted in the example below.

(20) *There was love there, (...)* (Carver, 1989: 99)

The use of existential process as marked by the word *was* also *there* with *love* as the existent define love as an entity that exists in the event in question. Note also that there is additional information about the place as marked by the circumstance *there* which refers to where Ed did all of his actions to show Terri his love. It explains that Terri will always imply what Ed did as love—although all of his actions back then are similar to what a murderer would do. She supports this specific idea of love as seen in the examples below.

(21) (...) *he was willing to die for it.* (Carver, 1989: 102)

(22) *He did die for it.* (Carver, 1989: 102)

In the examples above, Terri places the phrase *willing to die* thus to emphasize, she places *did die* as a mental and behavioral process of what a lover would do. There are also participants which both marked by the phrase *for it* in the

examples. These participants are referring to love which makes the assumption clearer.

Though what seems like love to Terri is as extreme as what a killer would do, she states another opinion of love. This one refers to what Nick and Laura describe love to her and Mel by doing physical touches on each other. She thinks that what Nick and Laura did is gross. Terri then suggests Nick and Laura to wait for some time to finally understand the meaning of love—as they are still new to marriage and all. This finding can be seen in the examples below.

(23) *Just wait.* (Carver, 1989: 103)

(24) *Wait awhile.* (Carver, 1989: 103)

The material processes as marked by the phrase *just wait* and the word *wait* in the examples above show how for Terri love would be understood by those who have been together for a long time. Thus, here she specifically describes love as the feeling perceived by those who can deal with each other for a matter of time.

In short, Terri defines love majorly to what Ed (her ex-boyfriend) did for her. Such words and phrases like *loved, tried to kill, beat, dragged, went on dragging, kept saying, love, kept knocking, drank, shot, bungled, may have acted crazy, was, was willing to die, and did die* as the processes in the data marked this result. To add a more detailed result, she also relates what Ed did (love) as the terms *crazy, true, and abnormal* by using relational processes such as *may sound* and *is* in the data. In addition, Terri defines love as how a couple would stay together from time to time marked by the phrase *just wait* and word *wait* as well.

3.2.2 Love According to Mel

Mel (or Dr. Melvin McGinnis) is also one of the four main characters in the short story. He is Terri's husband who also dominates most of the conversation about love in the story. There are 20 data found to conclude Mel's opinion about love according to the story. In the obtained data, it is discovered that Mel describes love through four types of processes. He presents his view of love mainly through material, relational, mental, and verbal processes.

Specifically, Mel relates love to many things in the story. One of the examples is shown below.

(25) (...) *real love was nothing less than spiritual love.*
(Carver, 1989: 99)

As depicted in the example above, Mel tries to relate two kinds of love (see the phrase *real love* as the token and *spiritual love* as the value which functions as the participants) with one another as realized with the phrase *was nothing less than* as the relational process. In which here he emphasizes that love is a feeling he acknowledges mentally rather than physically. Another example that shows Mel addressing love as other things is seen below.

(26) *The kind of love I'm talking about, you don't try to kill people.* (Carver, 1989: 100)

Mel also describes love as when the person who is in love does not try to kill their loved one here. The indirect relational process above shows how both participants as marked by the phrase *the kind of love I'm talking about* (as the token) and the clause *you don't try to kill people* (as the value) are related. Specifically, it

refers to Mel's perspective on Terri's opinion that love is what Ed did to her—tried to kill her and ended up killing himself. Meanwhile, the meaning of love is likely to be different even the opposite of that for Mel. Another example of how Mel expresses love as things is seen in the below example.

(27) *Physical love, that impulse that drives you to someone special, as well as love of the other person's being, his or her essence, as it were.* (Carver, 1989: 103)

See how the indirect relational process shows how Mel calls love *physical love* and values the idea as a material process marked by the word *drives* as depicted. It explains that love will include physical impulses which will drive us to our loved ones and ways that we love being on their side. Moreover, Mel also calls love *carnal love* and *sentimental love* as the element of token and as marked by the phrase *the day-to-day caring about the other person* as the element of value. Mel here sees love as the nonstop act of care for the loved ones which is shown in the following example.

(28) *Carnal love and, well, call it sentimental love, the day-to-day caring about the other person.* (Carver, 1989: 103)

Mel also attributes love as how he loved his former wife (Marjorie) in the past as presented in the example below.

(29) *I am like Terri in that regard.* (Carver, 1989: 104)

The word *I* above as the carrier which refers to Mel shows that the example specifically goes to Mel that carries the quality of Terri (marked by the word *Terri* herself as the attribute). The phrase *am like* as the process there portrays also the

result that Mel has the same attitude as Terri in dealing with this particular meaning of love. See also that the circumstance as marked by the phrase *in that regard* refers to the way Mel loved his former wife as much as Ed loved Terri back then. It proves that although the meaning of love for both Mel and Terri is really different, Mel somehow agrees with what Terri defines as love, particularly of how someone would kill to prove their love.

Though Terri explains love by relating the idea to many things in the short story, he eventually prefers to describe love to no other than a memory—or even more meaningless than a memory as seen in the following examples.

(30) (...) *it would just be a memory.* (Carver, 1989: 104)

(31) *Maybe not even a memory.* (Carver, 1989: 104)

The relational processes as marked by the phrase *would just be* and *maybe not even* identify that in both examples love is defined as something that can be forgotten (marked by the phrase *a memory* as the attributes). In this matter, Mel classifies love into something we tend to forget along with the passing time and heartbreaks it may cause. Moreover, Mel also describes love as a material type of process as depicted in the example below.

(32) *He loves Terri so much he tries to kill her and he winds up killing himself.* (Carver, 1989: 104)

It can be seen in the example above that although Mel has different opinions of love from Terri, he also agrees with the idea in which what Ed did to Terri could also define love. It is concluded as marked by the word *loves* as the process, *he* as

the participant (which refers to Ed), and *Terri* as the phenomenon. The circumstance of manner above (marked with the clause *he tries to kill her* and *he winds up killing himself*) can also be analyzed as the concepts Mel describes love as.

The first concept is Mel also refers love to how Ed tried to kill Terri in the past—which is what Terri majorly refers love to as seen in *he tries to kill her*. The phrase *tries to kill* as the process identifies the kind of action Mel defines love to which is killing his loved ones. Also, the word *he* (refers to Ed) and *her* (refers to Terri) there indicate from and for whom the action may affect—in this case, Ed as the actor and Terri as the goal. The second concept is Mel also identifies love as how Ed eventually killed himself as depicted in *he winds up killing himself*. It is as marked by the phrase *winds up killing* as the process and the word *he* and *himself* as the participants in the example above in which both refer to Ed. Besides, material processes in the data also referring to how Mel would relate love as actions did by vassals as depicted in the below example.

(33) *Some vassal would come along and spear the bastard
in the name of love.* (Carver, 1989: 107)

In the example above, Mel specifically refers love to an event when someone might hurt knights thus their vassals would take revenge here. The phrase *would come along* and the word *spear* identify this finding. The participants as marked by the phrase *some vassal* (as the actor) and *the bastard* (as the goal) classify the ones that are included in the event—the vassals and the one who hurts their knights. Furthermore, Mel also links love to an event where an old couple

almost lost each other to a car accident which is shown through the example shown below.

(34) *He couldn't turn his goddamn head and see his goddamn wife.* (Carver, 1989: 108)

Mel recalls love as a way that the husband of the couple feels scared of losing his wife by simply referring the idea to how he could not see her. Both actors as realized by the word *he* refers to the husband as the one who does the action. The material processes as marked by the phrase *couldn't turn* and *couldn't see* identify actions that the husband does which are can not turn his head (marked by the phrase *his goddamn head* as the goal) and can not see his wife (marked by the phrase *his goddamn wife* as the goal).

Mel also often delivers love as mental processes perceived by the characters in the short story—not as specific as Terri's by always referring *love* as mental processes to what Ed did to her. It is realized as depicted in the following examples below.

(35) *(...) we love each other.* (Carver, 1989: 103)

(36) *(...) we do, (...)* (Carver, 1989: 103)

(37) *I loved my first wife more than life itself.* (Carver, 1989: 104)

(38) *He loves Terri so much he tries to kill her (...)* (Carver, 1989: 104)

To add more explanation, in the above examples he describes love as a feeling perceived by almost all characters (again, not to specify one) in the short story by including the word *we* (refers to the four main characters in the story), *I*

(refers to himself), and *he* (refers to Ed) as the participants. In addition, he also states that expressing love can be done verbally as seen in the following example below.

(39) *We say we love each other.* (Carver, 1989: 103)

The verbal process as marked by the word *say* above shows that Mel agrees with the idea that love can also be expressed verbally as depicted in the element of verbiage there which is marked by the clause *we love each other*.

To conclude, Mel has many definitions about love which includes mentioning terms such as *real*, *spiritual*, *physical*, *carnal*, and *sentimental* to the word *love* itself. He also describes love by relating the idea to when someone will never try to kill the person they love, to the impulses to get closer to the person they love, to the everyday caring of the person they love, to what Ed did to Terri back then, to when someone is sad of not be able to see the person they love and to memory. The ideas are realized through indirect or direct relational processes marked by phrases such as *was nothing less than*, *am like*, *would just be* and *maybe not even* as the center. Moreover, he also describes love as something that can be sensed through material processes as marked by words and phrases such as *tries to kill*, *winds up killing*, *would come along*, *spear*, *couldn't turn*, and *couldn't see* in the data. Mel also acknowledges that love can be described as feelings perceived by the characters in the short story and can be expressed verbally as realized by mental processes marked by words like *love*, *do*, *loved*, *loves* and verbal process marked by the word *say* in the data.

3.3.3 Love According to Nick and Laura

Nick (narrator of the story) and Laura are two of the four main characters in the short story. They also contribute to the discussion about love that occurred in the short story. Unlike Terri and Mel who are dominating, both Nick and Laura are submissively contribute to the discussion. Only 6 data are found regarding the couple's view of love combined. Besides the insignificant data found, both also have the same opinion on love thus the result is merged into one. Their ideas on love are realized through two types of process namely material and relational. It can be concluded that both characters find love in physical touches of the ones who are in love—in this case, themselves in the short story. Of this matter, they majorly describe love physically as shown in the examples below.

(40) *For an answer, I took Laura's hand and raised it to my lips.* (Carver, 1989: 103)

(41) *I made a big production out of kissing her hand.* (Carver, 1989: 103)

As shown in the examples, Nick (marked by the word *I* in all of the data above) directly answer love as physical activities which are done to his wife by holding and kissing her hands. The circumstance as marked by the phrase *for an answer* shows how as a matter to answer Mel and Terri's question about the definition of love according to the couple, he thus acts as what is depicted in the example. The material processes as marked by the word *took* and *raised*, also the phrase *made a big production out of kissing* picture Nick's answer to the question. As well as the goals which all refer to Laura's hand (marked by the phrase *Laura's*

hand, the word *it*, and the phrase *her hand*) and the circumstance *to my lips* (which refer to Nick's lips) to later complete the information. Other physical activity that Nick shows to describe love is to hold Laura by his arms as shown below.

(42) *I put a hand on her warm thigh and left it there.*
(Carver, 1989: 103)

In the above example, material processes as marked by the phrase *put a hand* and the word *left* show the actions that Nick does to Laura (marked by the phrase *on her warm thigh* which refers to Laura's thigh and the word *it* which refer to his hands) to show his love to her. Additionally, though the idea refers to Mel's opinion, Nick eventually concludes that love is an absolute concept as shown in the following example.

(43) *Love is an absolute.* (Carver, 1989: 100)

The relational process above as marked by the word *is* shows how Nick relates love to an idea which related. To this matter, the word *love* as the carrier and the phrase *an absolute* as the attribute is related to one another. Nick specifically describes love here as a complete idea that is decided by the one who has the idea in mind which in this case, Mel.

In short, what Nick and Laura have in mind about love is alike. Both characters describe their ideas of love by showing physical affection towards each other. This result is marked through the major occurrences of material processes in the data as marked by words or phrases such as *took*, *raised*, *made a big production out of kissing*, *put*, and *left* as the center. In addition, Nick also describes love by

relating the idea to the concept *absolute* as realized through relational process *is* in the data which links love to the concept as the participants.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This study discovers that representing an idea particularly in a literary work can be done by emphasizing its linguistic features based on the concept of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) through a system named transitivity. The author eventually found many meanings of love based on the short story *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* written by Raymond Carver through the conducted transitivity analysis.

The result shows that the idea of love in the short story is realized through all categories of processes. In the data, material processes are dominating followed by mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential processes in order. By this finding, it can be concluded that love is described dominantly as actions that are done by the characters in the short story to their loved ones. It can be as extreme as killing, beating, dragging, knocking the head of the person they love, drinking rat poison, shooting themselves, killing themselves, fighting the other person that trying to kill the person they love, or as simple as staying together with the person they love, couldn't turn their head to see the person they love, holding the hands of the person they love, and kissing hands of the person they love. While through mental processes, love is transcribed as a feeling felt by the characters to the person they love specifically of a woman and a man by almost all of the characters in the

short story. Moreover, through relational processes, love can be translated into many things such as craziness, the act of caring towards the person they love, when they never try to kill the person they love, the impulses that bring them closer to the person they love, what Ed did to Terri (as of trying to kill Terri and killing himself) and is a decided idea by the character specifically Mel.

The rest of the processes which include behavioral, verbal, and existential processes also construct certain meanings of love although insignificant. In this case, through behavioral processes, love can be defined as a behavior (of dying) done by the character Ed to Terri in the name of love by trying to kill her and ended up killing himself. Later through verbal processes, love can be expressed verbally by such saying like “*I love you*” by the characters for the person they love. Also lastly, through an existential process, love can be defined as an entity that is existed in a certain event as in this case to where Ed tries to kill Terri.

This study concludes that the meaning of love in the short story *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* by Raymond Carver is represented as varies contextually and functionally through the transitivity analysis. Each process included in the data shows and discovers different meanings of love as explained above.

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