A STYLISTIC STUDY OF CHARACTERISATION IN PHIRI'S *TICKLISH SENSATION:* A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

BY

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A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Linguistic Science

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

Lusaka

2015

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I **Humphrey M. Kapau** declare that this dissertation:

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of **HUMPHREY MUYAMBANGO KAPAU** is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Linguistic Science by the University of Zambia.

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Abstract

This study examined characterisation in Phiri's *Ticklish Sensation* from a Systemic-Functional perspective. Specifically, the study sought to identify process-types attributed to major and minor characters; identify transitivity patterns embedded in process-types attributed to major and minor characters; and to establish the stylistic significance of the identified transitivity patterns in the characterisation of each major and minor character in the novel.

The present study was framed under the methodological framework of stylistics within which a descriptive research design was employed. Within the descriptive research design, qualitative approach – complemented by quantitative approach – was used. Summative and directed content analysis was used within the qualitative approach while descriptive statistics was used in the quantitative approach. A diary and a notebook were used as data collection aids because data was collected from published material consisting of the novel entitled *Ticklish Sensation.*

The data collection procedure proceeded as follows: having read the novel, major and minor characters were identified and the clauses embedding the identified characters were equally identified and isolated. The clauses associated to each character were later typed in Microsoft Excel according to process-types pending a transitivity analysis.

Data analysis drew on Halliday (1971) and Simpson (2004)'s notions of transitivity profile and involved establishing the stylistic significance of the identified transitivity patterns in the characterisation of each major and minor character. Descriptive statistics was employed to support the qualitative discussion on characterisation of major and minor characters in *Ticklish Sensation.* Samples of analyses were later given to two lecturers from literature section of the Department of Literature and Languages of the University of Zambia for verification after explaining to them the coding scheme and the transitivity model.

The study reveals that all characters have Material Processes (MaPs), Mental Processes (MePs), Relational Processes (RePs), Verbal Processes (VePs) and Behavioural Processes (BePs). However, all characters lack Existential Processes (ExPs), except for Kinki. Some of the transitivity patterns that the findings establish are: verbs of action and constant thematic progression. The findings also reveal that transitivity patterns serve different stylistic purposes in the characterisation of characters.

The implication of the findings is that transitivity patterns enhance characterisation and that the transitivity model can exhume aspects of characterisation in a literary work. Therefore, the study recommends that secondary school teachers and college and university lecturers should apply the transitivity model as a tool in addressing characterisation in literary works. In addition, it recommends that future studies should apply the transitivity model on other Zambian literary works so as to offer insights on whether transitivity patterning for males as central characters is identical to that where females are central characters; and whether transitivity patterning in a short story could be similar to that in a novel.

DEDICATION

To my beloved future wife, our adorable future children, grandchildren and great grand children – all still hidden in the womb of mother nature at the time of writing this dissertation; my nieces Hope, Peggy, Mary and Esther, and my future nieces and nephews that nature will provide; my sisters Bridget Namakaliza Kapau, Bronah Sililo Kapau and Blessings Kapau; my brothers Brian Musopa Kapau and Joe Sitwala Kapau; and to my earthly god and goddess namely my father Mr. Godfrey Sitwala Kapau and my mother Jane Peggy Kabonde respectively.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Adj. – Adjective

Adj. P – Adjective Phrase

Adv. P – Adverbial Phrase

BePs – Behavioural Processes

Cl – clause

ExPs – Existential Processes

MaPs – Material Processes

MV – Main verb

MePs – Mental Processes

N/A – not applicable

RePs – Relational Processes

SFG – Systemic Functional Grammar

SFL – Systemic Functional Linguistics

VePs – Verbal Processes

V – verb

N – noun

= 'equals/means/translates into'

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