An investigation into the Lexico-grammatical features of the Behavioural Process

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Within the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Halliday (1994) proposes six process types that each represents a different experience. These process types are concerned with the transitivity system, and are formed from the lexico-grammatical interface of the verb and surrounding participants and circumstances. Whilst some instances of language fit neatly into a specific process type category, others are not always obvious, and this can lead to discrepancies in process type analysis (O'Donnell et al. 2009). Ambiguity in process type classification is especially true for behavioural processes, as there are no reliable lexio-grammatical reactances to distinguish them from other processes, and in particular from material processes that are intransitive. Behavioural processes and intransitive material processes have similar syntactic properties, for example, they cannot take a *that*-complement, favour the present progressive, behaviourals are typically intransitive. The main difference lies in the semantics, where intransitive materials represent physical actions or happenings (such as *running* or *climbing*; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 224) and behaviourals represent the outer manifestations of inner conscious states (such as *coughing* or *laughing*; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 215). This paper seeks to increase our understanding of the nature of behaviourals, as a clause pattern, and in doing so, attempts to identify any lexico-grammatical reactances that can be used to differentiate behavioural processes from other processes, with a particular focus on intransitive material processes.

Real language data was obtained from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA; Davies 2008-). The focus here is on fifteen 'behavioural' verbs, i.e. verbs that have been identified as typically occurring in behavioural processes (e.g. *talking, crying*) according to key SFL sources such as Martin & Matthiessen 1992; Martin et al. 1997; Halliday & Matthiessen 1999; Eggins 2004; Bartlett 2014; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014; Banks 2015. As briefly outlined above, these verbs are said to display distinct lexico-grammatical features (cf. Halliday 1994). A case study of three intransitive 'material' verbs (*walking, working* and *playing)* was also included. Intransitive material processes were identified using the same key SFL sources as with the behavioural process identification. It is worth noting that differentiating verbs as either behavioural or material can be an ambiguous process; the problem presented here is that there is not a clear distinction between these categories. A random sample of 30 concordance lines was produced for each target verb form, producing 450 concordances of behavioural processes and 90 intransitive material processes. Whilst these processes under study here are regarded as typically occurring with the *–ing* form, all forms of the lemma were analysed to determine if this was in fact the case, or whether a lexico-grammatical difference could be revealed between behavioural processes and intransitive materials. The concordance lines were then analysed using Hanks' (2004) Corpus Pattern Analysis (CPA), an approach that reveals how meaning is mapped onto verbal patterns (ibid: 87). Patterns were numbered and grouped depending on their syntactic structure, and each pattern was assigned a meaning or implicature that the pattern reveals.

The analysis provides a detailed mapping of syntactic patterns of verbs, which has the potential to draw out different insights than when analysing at the level of word class alone (Hanks 2008, p.111). As well as CPA, the concordance lines were analysed in terms of grammatical aspect and lexical aspect, according to the summary outlined by Van Rompaey (2013, pp.181–219). The paper highlights the value in using CPA combined with aspectual analysis to reveal more about

the lexico-grammatical properties of the behavioural process, and directly addresses the similarities and differences revealed between behavioural and intransitive material processes.

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