



Thematization as a Cohesive Device: Analysis of The Novel 'Animal Farm'

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ABSTRACT

This study x-rays the status of thematic development and selection in the novel: 'Animal Farm'. Thematic structure plays a major role in organizing the message and in enabling it to be communicated and understood clearly. Theme structures clearly show the message organization. The writer arranges his message in a manner that will make his ideas to stick together and to make it easier for the reader to comprehend. Theme structures play a vital role in continuity of discourse and in text coherency. It is the starting point of the writer's /speaker's message at clause level. The problem lies on the fact that the second language learners of English have been found to have difficulty in using cohesive devices, especially, in the use of theme structures in their write-ups. The theory is derived from Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. The aim of the study, therefore, is to find out the extent for which the author used themes as a cohesive device in his narrative. Linguists have posited that theme acts as a cohesive device in the texts and many previous reviews have attested to this fact. The source data, Animal Farm was diligently and painstakingly read by the researcher and was critically analyzed by him. The analysis shows that writer of the novel, Animal Farm, used thematic constructions to achieve cohesion in his narrative.

Keywords: Theme, Structure, Organization, Selection, Functional Linguistics, Halliday

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1. INTRODUCTION

Grammar is defined by many linguists in different ways. The Oxford English Dictionary sees it as "the rules in a language for changing the form of words and joining them into sentences"(2005). Again, Yule views grammar as 'linguistic etiquette', that is, the identification of the 'proper' or 'best' structures to be used in a language; the study and analysis of the structures found in a language, usually with the aim of establishing a description of the grammar of English (87). But, in his Systemic Functional Linguistics, Halliday, (qtd by Allerton) defines grammar as a system of choices or options with complex relations between them (6). In the theory, Halliday sees meaning as a range of choices or options (system) from which language users choose what they want to say.



That is, Halliday views grammar as resource and not as rule governed. The theoretical principles underlying the study of theme and rheme are derived mainly from the Systemic Functional Linguistics.

Accordingly, Martin and Rose say that:

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a big multi-perspectival theory with more dimensions in theory bank that might be required for any one job. SFL is called systemic because compared with other theories, it foregrounds the organization of language as options for meaning and is also functional because it interprets the the design of language with respect to ways people use it to live (pp, 21 and 24).

According to Halliday, (qtd in kress) grammar of a language is reduced to a small set of functional components called meta-functions. The meta-functions are divided into the ideational function, interpersonal function and the textual function.

The ideational function: This aspect organizes language in such a way as to use it to relate the realities or experiences of the world: to express content, to convey information, messages, ideas, concepts and processes. Ideational function is divided into the experiential and logical metafunctions. The experiential metafunction is used to arrange participants and circumstances, while the logical metafunction is used to make discourse clear and coherent by using reasoning and linkages. Ideational function is realized in the clause by transitivity.

The interpersonal function: the interpersonal component expresses the speaker's role in the speech situation, his/her personal commitment, and his/her interaction with others. Interpersonal function expresses the relation between language and its users, communicates the speaker's attitudes and influences the behavior and attitudes of the hearer. This function is realized in the clause by mood and modality. It indicates personal meaning in the type of exchange going on, the role of the participant and the attitude and judgement of the speaker.

The textual function: This component expresses the structure of information and the relation of each part of the discourse to the whole and setting. In doing so, language is used to produce a cohesive text.(pp 19-24)

Halliday (qtd by Melrose) states:

The selection of options in the textual systems such as those of theme information and Voice and also the selection of cohesive patterns...tends to be determined by the symbolic Forms taken by the interaction of medium, written or spoken....But it extends to much More than this, to the particular semiotic function or range of functions the text is serving The rhetorical concepts of expository, didactic, persuasive, descriptive and the likes are examples of such semiotic functions (35).



That is to say that the textual function is realized in grammar by message structure, system of theme and information, deictic, voice, presupposition and cohesive patterns of reference.

Second language acquisition studies on writing skill stress the need of producing cohesive and emphatic discourse to maintain linkage in discourse. The aim of the work is to find out the extent for which the author used thematic construction as cohesive device in the novel. It is also to unravel the typological perspectives of theme and the syntactic processes involved. The problem is that the second language learners have been found to have difficulty in using cohesive devices, especially, the use of themes as cohesive device, in their write-ups. The mastering of the typology and the syntactic processes would go a long way in helping the learners of English as a second language (ESL) to write a clear comprehensible cohesive text.

The novel, *Animal Farm*, written in English by George Orwell is used as the source data for analyzing theme structures.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Halliday sees grammar in three ways namely the theme, mood and transitivity systems, and they are located at the clause level. The theory is rooted in Halliday's Systemic functional Linguistics of textual meta-functions. Theme structures (textual meta-functions) reveal the organization of the message. It gives a sense of continuity in discourse and they help to make a text coherent, and take care of the positioning of the element within the clause. In view of this, the researcher has adopted this theory for through analysis of the text "*Animal farm*" written by George Orwell.

2.1 The Concept of Theme and Rheme

Fries points out in view of theme and rheme that "there are good sufficient internal grammatical reasons to say that the beginning is special for some reason, and goes on to argue that 'initial position in the sentence, or sentence level enables us to achieve an important discourse. Theme means 'point of departure of the sentence as message (p119).

Wang sees theme as "the 'angle or departure of a clause. It is what each utterance is about...' The theme is the starting point of a clause and includes the participant, process or circumstance." (154) According to Fairclough in Opara the "theme is the text producer's point of departure in a clause, and generally corresponds to what is taken to be 'given information, that is, information already known or established for text producers and interpreters." (31)

For Brown and Yule," theme is not only the starting point of the message, but it also has a role of connecting to what has been said. They said that it is the most left constituent of the sentence which has two important functions. (1) It serves as the point of departure for the further development of the discourse, and (2) it maintains a coherent point of view by connecting back and linking into the previous discourse." (133)



Halliday in Opara views “theme as what is being talked about, the point of departure for the clause as a message or the element which is put in the first position.” (26). He goes on to say that theme system is a system at a clause level and it takes care of the position of the element within the clause. The theme is the starting point of the speaker’s/writer’s message at clause level and could be realized by a nominal group, a verbal group, a prepositional phrase and an adverbial group. Rheme is the part of the clause that deals with what is said about the theme (Opara, 26).

4. THEMATIC ORGANIZATION

Halliday classifies theme into the following groups:

Topical theme: A theme realized by ideational element which conflates with either S P C or A (cir). That is, it is represented by a nominal group (someone), a prepositional phrase (with ship continually at sea), or an adverbial group (by the middle of 15th century). Other examples are: He was twelve years old, You made me wash the car yesterday, somebody has to do the work, Boxer was an enormous beast, nearly eighteen hands high. On frivolous item, she always spends her money, Through the window, the robber jumped in, to a logical conclusion, the policeman carried out the investigation, at one end of the barn, the two horses had just laid down. Very slowly, Mary sang the song. By 6pm, the lecture ended. With ease, he slapped the boy.

Interpersonal theme: It is represented in interpersonal element, for instance, vocatives (direct address such as personal names), modal adjuncts, such as probably, I think, to mean, in my opinion; finite verbal operator (temporal and modal), WH-questions and imperative, let’s.

Examples; Clover, where are those four foals you bore? Comrades, you have heard already about the strange dream that I had last night. Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours? Surprisingly, he did not pass the exam. Unfortunately, the sick man died of cancer. Probably, the president will come to Imo State tomorrow. Maybe, all will be well. Did you go and sort out the problem?. May Almighty God be our helper!. Is it not crystal clear, then, comrades that the evils.... Were they there when the man died? How right is Okonkwo? John would never stop fighting. Where are these people going to?. Who ate the food in the cupboard? Which of these books are yours?

Textual theme: A theme realized by a textual element such as continuatives (small set of discursive items which signal that a new move is beginning, such as yes, no, oh), structural elements (coordinates and subordinates) and conjunctive adjuncts (which relate the clause to the preceding texts such as yet, in other words) (p, 54). Other examples are: Oh! I can never see her again. Well, we will see what we can do later, Yeah, the man is no more. But, I will come to the dream later. And even the miserable lives we ...For myself, I do not grumble. And you hens, how many eggs have you laid... Provided you will read it, I will give you the book. Unless you finish the work, I will not go with you. Until, I nearly bust my stomach... All because you said you want school...In order to see Jesus, the short man climbed a tree. Whenever he comes, I will notify you. Nevertheless, without openly admitting it, he was devoted to Boxer. However, he did not pass the exam, the fact remains that the student studied hard. Though he tried hard, he failed the exam.



Halliday, also introduced simple and multiple themes. A simple theme is a theme which has a topical element. For instance, she was so kind to her four cats-topical. And a multiple theme is one that may have the interpersonal and textual themes in addition to topical theme. For instance, and, the servant was waiting for the cats-textual+ topical (p 55). Others are: all because you said that you wanted school= textual + topical. Now, we gave you school = interpersonal +topical

Also, Halliday distinguished between marked and unmarked themes. An unmarked theme is when an element that occupies the theme position of the clause conflates with grammatical subject, for example, The goat went shopping-unmarked. But in marked theme, an element other than the subject occupies the theme position, so a condition is created for the appearance of marked theme, for example, In the morning, the goat went to jungle to find the wolf-marked (p,44).

4. DATA ANALYSIS OF 'ANIMAL FARM' BY GEORGE ORWELL

Topical theme which conflates with either S P C (nominal group), prepositional group and adverbial group (A (cir)). Examples as found in the novel are:

Boxer was an enormous beast, nearly eighteen hands high
He was twelve years old and had lately grown stout
I do not know when the rebellion will come
The pigs had set aside the harness-room as a headquarters for themselves
At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was already ensconced...
As soon as the light in the bedroom went out, there was a stirring and fluttering all through the farm buildings.
After the horses came Muriel, the white goat, and Benjamin, the donkey
Last night, it came back in my dreams
During the next three months there was much secret activity
For the first few minutes the animals could hardly believe in their good fortune
Sometimes the work was hard; the implements had been designed for human beings not for animal
We are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies
At last Mollie decided to see the doctor
After the horses came Mollie and Boxer
On the table sat the cat and the goat
For myself I do not grumble

Interpersonal theme is realized in vocatives, modal adjuncts, finite and verbal operators, WH-questions and imperative, let's) Examples in the novel are

Clover, where are those four foals you bore?
Comrades, you have heard already about the strange dream that I had last night
Mollie, she said, I have something very serious to say to you
Gentlemen, concluded Napoleon, I will give you the same toast as before, but in different form
Unfortunately, the uproar awoke Mr. Jones, who sprang out of bed,...
Probably , Napoleon took no interest in Snowball's committees
Maybe, the birds did not understand Snowball's long words, but they accepted his explanation
Surprisingly, Mollie said, 'It isn't true!' But she could not look Vlover in the face



Now, comrades, What is the nature of this life of ours?
Frankly speaking, the animals were terrified to see the dogs wagging their tails around Napoleon
Is it not crystal, then, comrades that the evils of this life of ours spring from the tyranny of human beings?
Is it not said that no animal shall sleep in the bed with sheets?
Do you know what the real reason was?
Did we not see for ourselves how he attempted-fortunately without success- to get us defeated and destroyed at the Battle of the Cowshed?
Why then do we continue in this miserable condition?
Why, work night and day, body and soul, for the overthrow of human race?
How many thousands of gallons of milk have you given during this last year, cows?
What then must we do?

Textual theme is realized in continuatives, coordinates and subordinates, and conjunctive adjuncts).
Then we normally had a loaf of bread for breakfast
Oh! What miserable life are we living
And you hen, how many eggs have you laid...
And even the miserable lives we lead are not allowed to reach their natural span
But everyone worked according to his capacity
But is this simply part of order of nature?
Yet he is the lord of all the animals
Because nearly the whole produce of our labour is stolen from us by human beings
When the animals gathered, Napoleon looked at their miserable faces one by one
Whenever Muriel read over the seven commandments, she noticed that there was yet another of them which the animals remembered wrong
After the hoisting of the flag, the animals were required to file past the skull in a reverent manner before entering the barn
Nevertheless without openly admitting it, he was devoted to boxer
Because nearly the whole of the produce of our labour is stolen from us by human beings
On the whole, these projects were a failure
Nevertheless, they were both thoroughly frightened by the rebellion on the animal Farm,...
Afterwards squealer made a round of the farm and set the animal's mind at rest
Meanwhile the timber was being carted away at high speed
Besides, the animals were surprised at what Napoleon had said
However, these stories were never fully believed

Note: The examples of these themes above (topical theme, interpersonal theme and textual theme) which serve as cohesive devices are mostly located at both inter-sentence and inter-paragraph boundaries.



5. DISCUSSION

The analyzed novel, 'Animal Farm', is a typical example which shows that thematic structure cannot be wished away in a hurry in creating texts because it is a very effective and valuable asset in connecting ideas in texts. George Orwell, the author of Animal farm had a firm grip on Halliday's language meta-functions because he meticulously applied the technique in his creation of the novel. He uses ideational (experiential theme) aspect of language in construction of his experience towards exposing the ills of the society and the wickedness of human beings through creating a socio-economic institution whereby animals and human being interact and share their feelings. His experience, realized in topical theme, is astutely put into words by establishing these pertinent circumstantial facts; what is going on, including who is doing what to whom, where, when, why and how in the novel. It is to be noted that the researcher is not analyzing the novel but rather he is analyzing the theme structures used in bringing the message of the novel to fruition. Also the author application of interpersonal theme as mentioned above is used to showcase how the animals and the humans interact and share their feelings to one another. The novel is allegorically didactic.

The themes (topical, which includes the use of nominal group, prepositional phrase and adverbial group; interpersonal, which includes the use of vocatives, modal adjuncts, finite verbs (temporal and modal) and Wh- interrogatives; and textual, which includes the use of continuatives, coordinates and subordinates and conjunctive adjuncts) are adroitly handled by the author to indicate that theme-rheme patterns are very significant in guiding the reader through the logical paths he constructed ; knowing that if little attention is paid to those patterns, his attempt to help the readers comprehend the novel will be destroyed. That is to say that the author used theme- rheme structure in construction of a cohesive and coherent narrative which indicates that meaning is attached to the first position of the clauses. These themes which serve as cohesive devices are mostly located at both inter-paragraph and inter sentence boundaries.

6. CONCLUSION

This study goes to show that thematic structure is as important as it is effective in creating texts. It promotes coherence between ideas in discourse. This study also puts forward that comprehending the way texts are interpreted and created will be exercise in futility without the concept of theme and thematic organization. Theme and rheme patterns are very valuable in writings because it serves as beacon through which readers navigate the logical path constructed by the writer, and in so doing understand the writer's thought. According to Belmonte and Mocabe, a cohesive discourse can be created in three ways namely by employing topical theme, the writer represents the propositional content, by applying interpersonal theme, the writer exchanges structure, and expresses his or her attitude and, by using textual theme, the writer can organize the message in the discourse, create text and set up a local environment in which the reader can interpret their message (13). Also, being aware of the thematic structures will go a long way in helping the readers to understand the text equally. The readers must be familiar with the way various thematic choices or options are presented in different texts. The readers' familiarity with these thematic options can help them understand the writers meaning through their use of logical signposts, by considering the fact that the kind of meaning represented by thematic choices may vary with regards to the purpose of the Writing.



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