

Three Meta-functions in ‘To My Dear and Loving Husband’ Poem by Anne Bradstreet

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze a literary work with systemic functional linguistics approach. Ideational, textual and interpersonal meanings are analyzed from the English poem entitled “To My Dear and Loving Husband” by Anne Bradstreet. The researcher applied meta-function concepts of Halliday and Matthiessen as the framework to investigate three metafunctions used in English Poem “To My Dear and Loving Husband” by Anne Bradstreet. In systemic functional linguistics, there are three meta-functions, namely ideational, textual and interpersonal meanings. The focus of this study is on three meta-functions used in the data. This study applied qualitative method to gather in-depth insights into a problem. The poem was broken down into individual clauses which were then analyzed by applying SFL in tables. The result showed that the majority of the text used mental processes and topical unmarked theme, which indicated that the poet wished to immortalize her love for beloved husband and their love would remain forever in these lines of the poem.

INTRODUCTION

In systemic functional linguistics tradition, the highest level of meaning which abstractly covers three levels of meaning: ideational, interpersonal and textual is called meta-function. The ideational function expresses physical and biological reality and is concerned with interpretation and experience. Interpersonal function expresses social reality and concerns the interaction between speakers/writers and listeners/readers. Meanwhile, the textual function expresses semiotic/symbolic reality by creating text in context. The meaning which falls within the scope of these three functions is called ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning. A text contains these three areas of meaning as one unit. Therefore, to determine the meta-function meaning of a text, analysis of the three areas of meaning is carried out simultaneously. This method is also applied in the poem of ‘To My Dear and Loving Husband’ by Anne Bradstreet.

Perrine (1974, p. 3) asserts that poetry is perhaps the most difficult kind of language. Poetry is the most difficult type of language because poetry requires compactness in expression. This compactness is not only reflected in words which have a meaning that has a wider reach than everyday language words, but also plays a role as a second layer dimension builder such as building an impression or imagery effect, rhythmic order in each line, forming a tone voice as a reflection of the poet's attitude, such as cynicism, irony and hyperbole towards the subject matter he raises in his work, and builds another dimension which is present without being visible because it is behind the literal meaning. It seems clear that poetry requires study or analysis if the reader or the researcher wishes the true depth of meaning. This study was carried out in that manner to describe, analyze and interpret meta-function meanings found out in Anne Bradstreet's poem.

Halliday asserts that there are three types of metafunctions, namely ideational function, interpersonal, function and textual function:

Functional components are components of the language system which correspond to the abstract functions of language-to what I have called 'meta-functions', areas of meaning potential which are inherently involved in all uses of language. These are what I am referring to as ideational, interpersonal and textual; generalized functions which have as it were become built into language, so that they form the basis of the organization of the entire linguistic system (Halliday, 1974, pp. 93-94).

The interpersonal meta-function investigates the relationship between semantic interaction organization and grammatical difference in clause Mood structure (Eggins, 2004). Mood is one of the essential interpersonal components in a clause since it allows for interaction through speech functions such as statements, questions, offers, and demands (Derewianka & Jones, 2016; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Martin & White, 2005). Those speech functions are stored by three syntactic Moods, namely declarative, interrogative and imperative as well as implemented by grammatical choices (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

The ideational meta-function deals with representation of experience or content expressed in language: all the doing, sensing, being, saying activities in the world (Emilia, 2014). In addition, part of the experiential meta-function is transitivity and it is realised in three language items, namely participant, process and circumstance:

Part of the experiential meta-function is Transitivity system, since it is concerned with the ways "content" or experience expressed in language. Therefore, transitivity is expressed within clauses, and it is realised in three language items: the process itself (which must be present) which is expressed in the verbal group, the participants (if they are present) which are expressed in nouns or noun groups and any associated circumstances (where they are present) which are expressed in adverbial (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Emilia, 2014; Supyani in Kemala et al, 2024).

The textual meta-function deals with organizing language to make connected and coherent discourse (Emilia, 2014). The realisation of textual metafunction of language is the Theme system as proposed by Halliday. In English, new information is usually presented in the second part of the clause, that is Rheme, where the Theme is developed and as the writer or speaker typically depart from the familiar to head towards the unfamiliar, the rheme typically contains unfamiliar or "new" information (Eggins, 2004). There are three different types of Themes: topical Theme, interpersonal Theme and textual Theme. Topical Theme is relevant to the experiential meta-function, interpersonal Theme the interpersonal meta-function and textual Theme to the textual meta-function (Eggins, 1994; Halliday, 1994).

Studies on three meta-functions in the texts have extensively been conducted, for instance by Metekohy (2021) which identified the ideology of the song as portrayed through words and action of the protagonist in this song. This research focused on every single word in the lyric. The study used qualitative and descriptive methods. The data was analyzed by using Language Meta-function theory by Halliday's Ideational, Interpersonal and Textual meaning. The results of the research showed that three dominant processes of language can be found are Relational Process, Material Process, and Mental Process; with the last mentioned being the dominant one. Also, by analyzing the lyric, it can be concluded that the ideology of the song is the songwriter believes that all things that happened in the past is in the past. The same issue in three meta-functions has also been discussed by some researchers like Nisrina & Nasrudinilah (2021) which aimed to analyze a work of children's literature with systemic functional linguistics approach. ideational, textual, and interpersonal meanings are analyzed from the short story entitled "Jack and the Beanstalk" accessed from British council for kids. The researchers used descriptive qualitative method. The story was broken down into

individual clauses which were then analyzed using SFL in tables. The result showed that the majority of the text used material process and topical unmarked theme, which indicates that the story is simple but concise. However, not many studies have not been conducted to observe three meta-functions in English Poem, such as Anne Bradstreet's literary works. Therefore, this research was aimed mainly to describe, analyze and interpret three meta-functions which occurred in "To My Dear and Loving Husband" poem By Anne Bradstreet.

METHOD

This is a qualitative research aimed at describing three meta-functions which occurred in "To My Dear and Loving Husband" poem By Anne Bradstreet.

This research used a model applied by Wiratno (2018) to analyze three meta-functions in a text. This model is adopted primarily based on Halliday and Matthiessen framework. First, each clause was given a number and its type was stated according to the system (for example, Indicative-Declarative or Imperative and Proposition-Give or Proposal-Demand). Then, the clauses were deconstructed according to the Subject-Finite/(Predicator) structure (including the Mood-Residue structure), transitivity structure, and Theme-Rheme structure. Ergative structure analysis was not carried out considering that it was only an alternative to transitivity analysis. The analysis also did not include the situational context and cultural context that shape the register and genre of the text. After the analysis was complete, comments regarding the choice of clauses in this text from various aspects would be provided. This comment was intended as an interpretation of the poem as a text by answering the question: "Why did the text use lexicogramatics as revealed in the selected clauses?" It could be seen that from the perspective of ideational (in this subchapter, especially experiential), interpersonal and textual meaning, the choice of lexicogramatical is a reflection of the meaning of the text as a whole

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the analysis which have been conducted through observation of all the lines or clauses in the poem can be seen in the table presented to read three meta-functions from the poem.

1. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

If	ever	two	were		one
∅	Circumstantial Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
∅	Circumstance	Carrier	Process: Intensive Relational		Attribute
Textual Theme	Interpersonal Theme (Modal)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
∅	Residue	Mood		Residue	

2. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

Then	surely	we	∅	∅
Adjunct	Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Predicator
Circumstance	Circumstance	Carrier	Process: Intensive Relational	
Structural Theme	Modal: Interpersonal Theme	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
Residue		Mood		Residue

3. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

If	ever	man	were	loved	by wife
∅	Circumstantial Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct
∅	Circumstance	Senser	Process: Mental (Affection)		Circumstance
Textual Theme	Interpersonal Theme (Modal)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
∅	Residue	Mood		Residue	

4. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

Then	thee	∅	∅	∅
∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct
∅	Senser	Process: Mental (Affection)		Circumstance
Textual Theme	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
∅	Mood		Residue	

5. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

If	ever	wife	was		happy	In a man,
∅	Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
∅	Circumstance	Carrier	Process: Intensive Relational		Attribute	Circumstance
Textual Theme	Interpersonal Theme (Modal)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme			
Residue		Mood		Residue		

6. Imperative: Proposition-Demand (Command)

Compare		With me	Ye women
Finite	Predicator	Adjunct	Complement
Process: Mental (Cognition)		Phenomenon	Senser
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)		Rheme	
Mood	Residue		

7. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

If	you	can	∅
∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator
∅	Senser	Process: Mental (Cognition)	
Textual Theme	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
∅	Mood		Residue

8. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

I	prize		Thy love	More than whole mines of gold
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Senser	Process: Mental (Affection)		Phenomenon	Circumstance
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme			
Mood		Residue		

9. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

or	All the riches	that	The East	doth hold	
∅	Complement	∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator
∅	Goal	∅	Actor	Process: Material	
Textual Theme	Theme: Topical (Marked)	∅	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
∅	Residue	∅	Mood		Residue

10. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

My love	is		Such that rivers cannot quench]
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Carrier	Process: Intensive Relational		Attribute
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
Mood		Residue	

11. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

Nor ought	but	love	From thee	give		recompense
∅	∅	Subject	Adjunct	Finite	Predicator	Complement
∅	∅		Circumstance	Process: Material		Goal
Textual Theme	Textual Theme	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme			
Residue		Mood			Residue	

12. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

Thy love	is		Such [I can no way repay]
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Carrier	Process: Intensive Relational		Attribute
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
Mood		Residue	

13. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

The heavens	reward		thee	Manifold,
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Senser	Process: Phenomenon (Affection)		Phenomenon	Complement
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme			
Mood		Residue		

14. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

I	pray	
Subject	Finite	Predicator
Sayer	Process: Verbal	
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
Mood		Residue

15. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

Then	while	we	Live,	
Adjunct	∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator
Circumstance	∅	Actor	Process: Material	
Textual Theme	Textual Theme	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
Residue		Mood		

16. Imperative: Proposition-Demand (Command)

In love	let		's	So persever
Adjunct	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Circumstance	Process: Mental (Cognition)		Phenomenon	Circumstance
Textual Theme	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
Residue	Mood	Residue		

17. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

That	when	we	live		no more,
∅	∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct
∅	∅	Actor	Process: Material		Circumstance
∅	Textual Theme	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
∅	Residue	Mood		Residue	

18. Indicative-Declarative: Proposition-Give

We	may	live	Ever
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct
Actor	Process: Material		Circumstance
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
Mood		Residue	

It was clear that all clauses selected in the poem were classified into Indicative-Declarative clauses. These clauses functioned as Proposition-Giving information, namely clauses in statement forms which exchanged information, not goods and services. It meant that based on interpersonal meaning the poet positioned herself as the one who talked about the sweet relationship between her husband and the poet. The poet glorified her loving husband through this poem and they were one only. In addition, by writing this verse, Anne Bradstreet, the poet, wished to immortalize her love for her husband. The readers were classified as addressees who made use of information. Through the lexis "Compare" (clause 6) in the third and fourth lines, she reassured her husband that she was happy with him. She challenged him to compare her with any other woman and saw that she herself was the happiest of all women because she was married to him. The imperative clause occurred in the third and fourth line indicated that the poet and addressees were not close enough based on interpersonal meaning and they were not placed equally.

Based on ideational meaning, transitivity including participants, processes and circumstances in the poem, it could be explained that the poem revealed the essence of poet's love to her loving husband. It was found out that processes used in the poem were 17, with details of material processes: 5 (29,41%), mental process: 6 (35,30%), verbal processes (5,88%) and relational processes: 5 (29,41%). There were no behavioural process and existential processes in the poem. Mostly, processes used in the poem were mental process: 6 (35,30%), material processes: 5 (29,41%) and relational processes: 5 (29,41%). It meant that through mental processes, the poet would like to express her feeling for her loving husband and praise the mutual love between the poet and her loving husband. The poet also wished to immortalize her love for her beloved husband. As for intensive relational processes, the poet described her love for beloved husband by making identification to

show it and its characteristics and through material processes, the poet described physical activity in the poem. Besides that, the activity between the poet and her beloved husband as the participants (sayer) in the poem was stated with verbal process. Circumstances occurred in the poem in general were circumstance which showed the quality (for instance, surely), temporal (for instance, ever) and comparison (for instance, More than whole mines of gold).

The distribution of information in the poem could be revealed through Theme based on textual meaning. Themes occurred in the poem were Unmarked Topical Theme: 18 (58,06%), Marked Topical Theme: (0%), Structural Theme: (1%), and Textual Theme: 12 (38,71%). The realizations of Unmarked Topical Theme meant that in the poem, the main issues raised were themed mainly through Subjects, namely the poet herself and her beloved husband. As for Textual Themes which were all realized by external conjunctions, they were used to combine experiences about the poem which talked about the sweet relationship between the poet and her husband. In other words, the realizations of such Textual Themes showed that given information in the poem tended to be organized through the sequence of one event and another event in clause level, not through text arrangement with combining one idea and another at the discourse level. In addition, there were no Marked Themes occurred in the poem.

CONCLUSION

The findings showed that based on interpersonal meaning the poet positioned herself as the one who talked about the sweet relationship between her husband and the poet. The poet glorified her loving husband through this poem and they were one only. Based on ideational meaning, transitivity including participants, processes and circumstances in the poem, it could be explained that the poem revealed the essence of poet's love to her loving husband and as we could see that the most processes occurred in the poem were mental processes, material processes and relational processes. As for textual meaning, the most themes occurred in the poem were Unmarked Topical Theme which meant that the main issues raised were themed mainly through subjects between the poet and her beloved husband. Besides that, textual themes provided the readers with experiences about the poem which immortalized poet's love to her beloved husband in each line of the poem.

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