Halliday's SFL and Social Meaning

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Abstract. Halliday's systematic functional linguistics and transitivity where linguistic wording and the socio culturally constructed meaning meet in texts attempts to demonstrate that underlying ideology in the texts should be probed beyond the linguistic surface. (Fairclough, 1989,1995; Fowler,1977, 1986; Fowler, Hodge, Kress, and Trew, 1979). According to Halliday (1973), author's linguistic and functional choices are result of social circumstances and their influences on author's perception. Therefore, linguistic choices should be highlighted at the discourse level. This study attempts to explore Halliday's SFL, transitivity and metafunctions in terms of their implied social, semantic and functional load such. It manifests ideational function where the message and content of text including author's overall experience of the real world in the setting of time and place manifest individual's vision of the world; interpersonal function where the interlocutor's social roles, status, position and relations in the network of speech acts, mood and modality reflect individual's both inner and outer spheres; textual function embodying textual construction consisting of theme and rheme and cohesive components that links the text to the situational contexts.

Keywords: SFL, metafunctions, and transitivity and social ideology

1. Introduction

In Halliday's SFL, language as a social phenomenon is functional .i.e. it is concerned with the mechanism of text structure, function and meaning of language. It begins an analysis of language in social context where a particular lexico-grammatical choice is constructed under the influence of the social and cultural context. Meaning, central to SFL, is achieved through the linguistic choices in paradigmatic and the syntagmatic levels of discourse where the words are arranged in a clause or text.

Halliday argues: "Discourse is a multidimensional process and text as its product not only embodies the same kind of polyphonic structuring as is found in grammar, (in the structure of the clause, as message, exchanges and representation), but also since it is functioning at a higher level of the code, as the realization of semiotic orders 'above' language, may contain in itself all the inconsistencies, contradictions and conflicts that can exist within and between such high order semiotic systems.(1978: 96)". Discourse analysis is concerned with lexico-grammatical analysis of the language in the social, physical, cognitive, cultural, interpersonal and situational context.

2. Metafunctions

Halliday's SFL (Halliday 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen 2004), emphasizing on semiotics, the code of language and how the utterances and texts specify all the meaning potentials, studies the functional and situational organization of language in the social context (Halliday, 1985:11). It is concerned with how the speakers generate utterances and texts to convey their intended meanings through the "generalized metafunctions that relate language to the outside world where interactants and their social roles matter. According to SFL, language has three metafunctions of ideational, interpersonal, and textual reflected in a huge system network of meaning potentials including subnetworks of Transitivity, Thing, and Quality with specific set of semantic features for an utterance production.

Context of Situation rendered the ideas of metafunctions for Halliday (Halliday, 1978). The ideational function expressing the experiential and the logical content of the text explains our experience of the outer world in the environment; the textual function is language-oriented and deals with cohesive and coherent text production by organizing and structuring the linguistic information in the clause; and interpersonal function deals with the social and power relations among language users, It relates participant's situational roles to the discourse produced. (Halliday, 1981: 328). Metafunctions can be paralleled to grammatical categories of context of situation like:

- Ideational Transitivity Field
- Interpersonal Mood Tenor
- Textual Theme Mode

2.1. Ideational Metafunction:

Ideational metafunction provides grammatical resources at clause rank to construe the inner and outer experience or 'goings-on' of the word, as the domain of functions and meanings of the world through the systems of transitivity. It has two components of logical and experiential functions.

The concept of Transitivity:

In traditional grammar, transitivity was developed as the concept of transitive or intransitive verb (Halliday,1976:159) whether the verb takes an object or not, but in SFL it functions to link grammar to the meta functions; however, in Halliday's terms, transitivity as a major component in experiential function of the clause deals with the "transmission of ideas "representing 'processes' or 'experiences': actions, events, processes of consciousness and relations" (1985:53)

It is a semantic system to analyze representations of reality in a linguistic text and create the same experience through various lexico-grammatical options influenced by different mind styles or authorial ideology. (Fowler, 1986:138) It manifests how certain choices encode the author's certain ideological stance affected by social and cultural institution because according to Fowler these linguistic codes cannot reflect reality neutrally and definitely embody ideologies. (1986:27) It also functions as a rich analytic tool utilized in critical discourse analysis, dealing with "who or what does what to whom or what?" where actor, action and goal as affected are highlighted.

Transitivity with inter-related options to represent different types of process or experience investigated from above, below, and around consists of process, participant with different labels such as Actor, Goal; Senser, Phenomenon; Carrier, Attribute; and circumstance including Cause, Location, Manner, Means and Instrument.

Process refers to a semantic verb (doing, happening, feeling, sensing, saying, behaving, and existing) and anything that it expresses like event, relation, physical, mental or emotional state when sorted in the semantic system of the clause is classified into material, relational, mental, verbal, behavioral, and existential processes.(Halliday, 1976:159) These Linguistic "processes" as the products of our perception of the world are socially and culturally constructed with participants, any animate or inanimate noun phrase in circumstances expressed by adverbial and prepositional phrases. (Halliday, 1985: 101-102)

2.1.1. Material Process

Classified into intentional or spontaneous performance of an animate or inanimate, material processes, externalized and concrete embody an action verb of doing or happening, a doer is labeled as Actor and optional Goal, affected by the process and circumstance that provides details of the verb in terms of place, time, manner, condition, etc. The processes performed by an animate or inanimate Actor are respectively called Action and Event processes. Action process can be classified into Intention and Supervention processes if respectively performed intentionally or unintentionally. Material processes can be viewed from:

'from above', It construes action, activities, and events.

'from below', It refers to directedness and benefaction, it consists of Process + Actor + Goal (+ Recipient).

'from around', It accompanies the system of projection to report a speech or thought.

2.1.2. Mental Process

Classified into three categories of cognition, perception and affection, mental processes, internalized and consciousness type, are concerned with participants labelled as Sensor and Phenomenon. Mental processes can be viewed from:

'from above', It construes perception, cognition and affection.

'from below', It includes Process + Sensor + Phenomenon.

'from around', It manifests the content of consciousness such as a thought.

2.1.3. Relational Process:

Classified into intensive, attributive, identifying, circumstantial, and possessive, Relational processes are concerned with the processes of description regarding the abstract relations. Irreversible attributive process assigns a quality, or adjective to a participant titled as Carrier realized by a noun or a nominal phrase. Reversible Identifying process consists of two nominal phrases as participants, a Token holder and a Value meaning, referent, and status (Halliday,1985: 115) that can be turned into passive voice.

Halliday's Attitudinal Epithets for emotive terms whether objective or subjective, positive or negative at the rank of adjectives, adverbs and nouns in interpersonal function indicate the speaker's attitudinal approach towards an entity or event when arousing a particular image and effect in a narrative discourse and context such as lovely, attractive, fantastic, successful, beautifully, ruefully, superficially, poverty, illness, success, or meaningless. (Halliday 1994:184)

2.1.4. Verbal Process

A verbal process of direct or indirect report, standing on the border of mental and relational processes, relates "any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning' (Halliday, 1985:129) or the ideas in human consciousness with their linguistic representation of Sayer, the addressee labelled as Target, and Verbiage.

2.1.5. Behavioral Process

The behavioral Process standing between material and mental processes relate the physiological and psychological behaviors such as 'breathing; coughing; smiling; dreaming; and staring.' (1985:128)

2.1.6. Existential process

These processes are processes of existing with a there and to be with no representational function. An Existent can be an entity, event or action.

2.2. The Concept of Mood and Interpersonal Metafunction in SFL

Grammatically, interpersonal metafunction at the clausal level enjoys Mood. Mood is concerned with the topic of information or service and whether it is giving or demanding and the tenor of the relationship between interactants. Tenor deals with gender or status-based power. Muir (1972:92) and Halliday (1981:30) define Mood parallel to interpersonal communication which embraces three grammatical categories of speech function, modality and tone. The interpersonal metafunction concentrates on social roles and relations through formality degree, pronouns, clausal mood (whether declarative, imperative or interrogative), etc.

In interpersonal metafunction, the degree of intimacy or distance and the type of the relationship between the writer and reader or participants in a text through the type of modality can be explored; besides, the system of pronominal determination describes how a referent can be recognized through the stances of the referent regarding the speaker and listener.

The Mood element constituted by the Subject and the Finite (auxiliary or lexical verb) and the remainder of the clause as the Residue, determine the mood of a clause as verbal group. Hence, the order Subject+Finite establishes the mood as declarative, while the order Finite+ Subject establishes the mood as interrogative. In a system network, a clause can be declarative or interrogative with wh or yes-no format including material, mental, verbal, relational, or existential processes.

In terms of finite verb, subject and tense choice, SFL helps us express the speech functions such as persuading, enticing, motivating, demanding, inviting, ordering, proposing, recommending, confirming, persisting, and denying through a set of Mood clause systems. Through the scale of delicacy (level of detail

and particularity) in the mood system, a clause can be indicative or imperative. Indicative clauses are classified into interrogative and declarative; besides the element of tagging can be explored here.

(Sethe was sick)(who is she? Is she a ghost in a body?) (he comes back, doesn't he?)

(Listen to me, will you?) (Let's move out of this place, shall we?)

Speech-functional roles help meaning to be achieved through Mood such as statement or question requesting, commanding and offering. Semantic dimensions of functions such as declaration dealing with information exchange (statement), asking information (question), and demanding service (commands) are omnipresent in every language while the structure, organization, degree and realizations of delicate choices differ from one language to another. For every grammatical category, there are different realizations. Interactants are involved in a conversation with indicating, demanding, and evaluating responses and information through the degree of probability. Methaphorically, a command can be regarded as a statement or a question. Sethe should/ must /will give her daughter freedom. Would she ask him to stay?

2.3. The Concept of Theme and Textual Metafunction in SFL

Grammatically, textual metafunction at the clausal level enjoys Theme. Thematic structure is concerned with Theme, and Rheme, or the old and new information structure or topic and comment where any component in a clause like Subject, Predicator, Complement or circumstantial Adjunct can be topicalized and be placed in thematic position or the beginning of the clause which is more significant than other locations in a sentence. Muir (1972:98) proposes "the thematic element in a clause is the first element which results from choice."According to Halliday (1981:330) theme includes the message in a text, indicating the identity of text relations. Topic comes first and after that Comment appears to expand, justify and provide additional information to preceding information.

The clause acts as a message in the thematic statuses of Theme and Rheme in terms of the local and spatial position in a sequence where Theme takes the initial position whether marked or unmarked and Rheme the non-initial position. The information flows like a wave in a sentence from thematic top to thematic bottom which can be accompanied by rising or falling intonation. Theme slides toward Rheme and Given information toward New to reveal the location of information prominence.

Cohesion：

Cohesion, the "non-structural text-forming relations" (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 7) relates to the "semantic ties" or relations of meaning within text. The cohesive devices of referencing, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion were presented by Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Bloor and Bloor (1995)

2.3.1 Referencing

Classified into homophoric, exophoric and endophoric categories respectively referring to cultural shared information, immediate situation context, and textual information, referencing identifies presupposed information throughout the text. (Eggins 1994: 95) Endophoric referencing divided into anaphoric, cataphoric, and esphoric respectively refers to the previously mentioned (preceding) information in text, information presented later in the text, the same nominal group or phrase following the presupposed item. (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 51).There are also personal, demonstrative, and comparative references referring to speech situation noun pronouns like he, him or possessive determiners like mine and yours, this, here, there, then, same, equal, so, similarly, and otherwise. (ibid: 37–39).

2.3.2 Substitution and Ellipsis

In Bloor and Bloor (1995: 96), substitution and ellipsis is used to avoid the repetition of a lexical item through grammatical resources of the language. The substitution and ellipsis can be nominal, verbal and clausal. Substitution words have the same function such as "one and ones" for nouns and "do" or "so" as in "do so" or "that and "it" for verbal, nominal, and clausal substitutions and Halliday and Hasan (ibid:125–126). Functioning at the level of deictic, enumerative, epithet, classifier, and qualifier, ellipsis as "substitution by zero" (ibid: 142) refers to a presupposed anaphoric item through structural link.

2.3.3 Conjunction

Different application of conjunction leads to different textual styles. Recurrent use of Extension might add to the information solidity and effect but if not managed well confuses the reader. Texture as the basis for unity and semantic linkage within text makes any length of text meaningful and coherent. Classified into categories of additive, adversative, clausal and temporal, conjunction as another semantic cohesive element links the pieces and clauses of a text together to give meaning to the text. (Bloor and Bloor, 1995: 98) Three options of Elaboration, Extension, and Enhancement exist in conjunction. Elaboration clarifies and broadens the content by exemplification or simplification and extension adds information like Additive (besides), Adversative (nonetheless), Verifying (instead), Causal (so), and Conditional (if). Additive conjunction coordinates by adding to or negating the presupposed item, Adversative conjunctions indicate "contrary to expectation" (ibid: 250), Causal conjunction provides expresses "result, reason and purpose", and temporal links by signalling sequence or time.

2.3.4 Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion are non-grammatical and refer to the "cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary" (ibid: 274) like reiteration where a lexical item directly or indirectly occurs through application of synonym, antonym, metonym, or hyponym or a super-ordinate and collocation where pair of same event or environment lexical items co-occur or found together within the text. (ibid: 286). When these lexical items are closer, the text enjoys higher degree of cohesion. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 286). A text can be "tight" with many cohesive ties, or "loose", with fewer cohesive ties. (Halliday and Hasan, ibid: 297)

3. Conclusion

The three metafunctions act simultaneously and systematically not distinctly or independently in a text; in other words, Mood (interpersonal), Transitivity (ideational), and Theme (textual) function interdependently in the language system.

Grammar as a theory for representing human experience, roles and relations in SFL is a meaning-making resource through networks of mood, topic, and logic with their diverse functions. It is also lexico-grammatical for it acts as the central processing of meanings through wordings (Halliday, 1984/2002 :320; Martin, 2009). Through a trinocular dimension on clause classified as "from below" for syntactic realizations ,"from above" for semantic patterns, and "from around" for strategies of language logic construction. (Halliday, 2002:416). Clause complex can be explored through the sequences of events that are constructed lexico-grammatically particularly in terms of temporal and cause-conditional relations consisting of condition and effect.

4. References

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