

IDEATIONAL, INTERPERSONAL, AND TEXTUAL FUNCTION IN "THE COP AND THE ANTHEM" THROUGH A FUNCTIONAL STYLISTIC LENS

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Abstract

This paper utilizes the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to conduct a functional stylistic analysis of O. Henry's short story "The Cop and the Anthem." The study explores the three meta functions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual, and their influence on the story's language expression characteristics, plot setting, and total cohesion. The paper aims to provide a reference for future functional stylistic analyses of similar short stories. The methodological approach involves addressing the research questions RQ1: How does the short story The Cop and the Anthem reflect Ideational Function of SFL; RQ2: How does the short story The Cop and the Anthem reflect Interpersonal Function of SFL; and RQ3: How does the short story The Cop and the Anthem reflect Textual Function of SFL. The analysis focuses on the transitivity structure of the text and selected sentences while identifying and examining the essential components of the story such as material, relationship, psychology, behavior, existence, and speech processes. The paper contributes to the understanding of the deeper meaning of the story through a functional stylistic approach, beyond its humor and artistic qualities

Introduction:

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) has emerged as an influential theory that has provided new perspectives for analyzing literary works. This framework enables scholars to analyze language deeply and concisely. Using functional stylistics, this paper examines O. Henry's famous short story, "The Cop and the Anthem," and its language expression characteristics, plot setting, and total cohesion. By addressing the three meta functions of language, ideational, interpersonal, and textual, this study aims to provide a reference for future functional stylistic analyses of short stories. The analysis pays attention to the transitivity structure of the text and selected sentences, identifying and examining the necessary components of the story, including material, relationship, psychology, behavior, existence, and speech processes. As a result, this methodology provides a better understanding of the deeper meaning of the story beyond its humorous and artistic qualities. The study concludes by contributing to the understanding of the SFL framework's potential to analyze literary works, especially short stories like "The Cop and the Anthem."

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1. Literature review

Systemic functional linguistics is the study of the relationship between language and its functions in social settings. Also known as SFL, it includes three sections: meaning (semantics), sound (phonology), and wording or lexico grammar (syntax, morphology, and lexis).

Systemic functional linguistics treats grammar as a meaning-making resource and insists on the interrelation of form and meaning. This field of study was developed in the 1960s by British linguist M.A.K. Halliday, who had been influenced by the work of the Prague School and British linguist J.R. Firth (1890-1960).

According to Halliday (1975), language has developed in response to three kinds of socialfunctional needs. The first is to be able to construe experience in terms of what is going on around us and inside us. The second is to interact with the social world by negotiating social roles and attitudes. The third and final need is to be able to create messages with which we can package our meanings in terms of what is New or Given, and in terms of what the starting point for our message is, commonly referred to as the Theme. Halliday (1978) calls these language functions Meta functions and refers to them as ideational, interpersonal and textual respectively. Halliday's point is that any piece of language calls into play all three meta functions simultaneously.

Since the early 1970s, functional stylistics has developed vigorously. Functional stylistics is the abbreviation of "Systemic functional stylistics", which refers to the stylistic school based on Halliday's systemic functional linguistics. Different scholars interpret literary works from the perspective of functional stylistics. For example: Zhang(2007) attempts to demonstrate how certain theories of Halliday's SFL can analyze the implicit subject of the short story *Cat in the Rain* written by Ernest Hemingway to verify unconcerned relationship among people in it, the writer's writing style-iceberg rule and the operative theory of SFL on the analysis of literary text.

The Cop and the Anthem is a short story written by the famous American writer O. Henry. It shows readers the real side of American society in humorous language. The image of soapy created by O. Henry is a microcosm of the social phenomenon at that time. It embodies the tragic fate of the little people in the American lower class in the form of comedy. The novel makes readers feel as if they are in the streets of New York metropolis, witness the rough and hard life of people at the bottom like soapy, understand the dirty and vulgar world of colorful American society, and understand the essence of American judicial systemic and social systemic. The unfortunate experience of soapy contains a serious philosophy of life: the fate of low-level people like soapy living in American society is doomed to the tragedy of falling into the mud and not getting out of the mud. People can't get rid of the dilemma of human phenomenon, but can only get into the dilemma from the dilemma. Currently different scholars interpreted the novel from different perspective. For example: Wu (2014) and He (2014) both analyse the unique artistic features of humor in this short story. Tang (2015) analyzes and interprets it from the perspective of pragmatics, in order that readers can have a deeper understanding of this work. Jiang (2017) carried out analysis of artistic techniques. Although there are many researches interpreting the *The Cop and the Anthem*, there are few studies focusing on the ideational, interpersonal and textual function of this representative story from perspective of functional stylistics.

2. Research methodology

3.1 Research questions:

RQ1: How does the short story *The Cop and the Anthem* reflect Ideational Function of SFL.

RQ2: How does the short story *The Cop and the Anthem* reflect Interpersonal Function of SFL.

RQ3: How does the short story *The Cop and the Anthem* reflect Textual Function of SFL.

3.2 Research object:

The short story *The Cop and the Anthem* written by American writer O. Henry is the research object of this paper. It tells a poor and homeless tramp called Soapy who deliberately committed a crime like going to a restaurant for a bully meal, disturbing public order, stealing others' umbrellas, and flirting with women for the purpose of going

to prison to keep warm in the cold winter. However, none of these behavior made him go to prison as he wished. Finally, when he was moved by the anthem in the church and wanted to start over and reform, the cop sent him to prison. The novel shows the tragic fate of the American lower class at that time.

3. Meta function analysis

3.1 Ideational function analysis

Conceptual function consists of transitivity systemic and voice. The transitivity structure of discourse reflects the conceptual function of clause and reflects the variable of field in situational context. Halliday divides the transitivity structure into six processes: material, relationship, psychology, behavior, existence and speech. Through the analysis of the transitivity structure of *The Cop and the Anthem*, the full text is not long but involves the most material process and speech process, which implies that the author hopes to objectively narrate the content of the story and reveal the relationship between the characters through dialogue. The following will explain the six processes in the work and their role and influence on the whole novel in combination with the text.

1). Material process

Material process refers to the process of doing something. The material process accounts for the largest proportion in the transitivity structure analysis of the whole novel, which is reflected in a large number in the text.

Example 1: Soapy, having decided to go to the island, at once set about fulfilling his desire

In example 1, the material is “Soapy”, the material process is “set”, and the tense is “-ed”, conveying the message of “Soapy was going to achieve his dream after his decision to go to the island”. The words of material process selected by the author are very concise, and the voice is also very rich. It uses the adverbial of non finite to express the material process, and the real thing to do is also very clear, that is, “go to the island to achieve his dream”. Therefore, it can be seen that O.Henry’s choice of words is logical and clear, and there is no lack of clarity in obscurity.

Example 2: Soapy had confidence in himself from the lowest button of his vest upward

In example 2, the material is “Soapy”, the material process is “have”, the tense is “-ed”, and the environment is from the lowest button of his vest upward. This statement does not use the simple clause soapy decided to progress upward, but uses had confidence in himself. This phrase indicates that “Soapy has changed his view of himself while indicating Soapy’s decision to forge ahead”, implying that he will actively face the information of changing bad habits in life. Therefore, it can be seen that O.Henry is very original in terms of words.

Example 3: Soapy strained the lady’s missionary’s ready made tie, dragged his shrinking cuffs into the open, set his hat at a killing cant and sidled towards the young woman.

Example 3 is still a sentence indicating a material process. The actor of material is “Soapy”, and the material processes are “straight, drag, set & idle”. The tense is “- ed”. This sentence conveys the message that Soapy was cautious at that time. These verbs are selected very vividly, which shows the state of Soapy at that time.

2). Relationship process

Relational process refers to the expression of relation in this sentence, and the most prominent feature is that it has a copula. There are also a large number of sentences expressing relational processes in the novel.

Example 4: a dead leaf fall in Soapy’s lap. That was Jack Frost’s card. Jack is kind to the regular denizens of Madison Square, and gives fair warning of his annual call.

Example 4 is taken from the second paragraph of the text. The first sentence is material process, and the last two sentences are relational process. The three sentences are progressive and clear, and the tasks involved in the story background are also explained very clearly.

Example 5: it was Soapy’s design to assume the role of the designable and executed “masher.”

Example 5 is also a statement indicating the relationship process. Henry puts the real entity Soapy’s design in the position of attribute and selects the formal subject it as the entity, so as to emphasize and explain Soapy’s design.

At the same time, it also avoids the problem of top heavy and light weight in sentences and makes the sentences neat and smooth.

Example 6: one dollar for the cigar would be enough. The total would not be so high as to call forth any supreme manifestation of revenge from the cafe management;

In example 6, there are two statements representing the relational process. The entity in the first sentence is one dollar and the attribute is enough. The entity of the second sentence is the total and the attribute is so high. The tense of the first sentence is “would” and the tense of the second sentence is “would not”. Two sentences, one positive and one negative, form a turning point and contrast, and emphasize the information of the total would not be so high in the second sentence. It can be seen that under the simple sentence pattern, the main information can be highlighted by enriching the tone.

3). Psychological process

Psychological process refers to the activity of expressing emotion and describing psychology. There are few sentences describing psychological processes in this paper, such as ready he imagined he could feel the cozy warmth of the station house. It shows that O.Henry focuses on what the protagonist does in order to show his personality characteristics without too much description of his psychological state.

4). Behavior process

Behavior process refers to people’s behavior (body movements such as speaking, laughing, jumping, waving, etc.). There are many behavioral process sentences in the first half of this paper, which makes the character image more rich and full. For example, at the corners of four streets he hands his pasteboard to the north wind, footman of the tension of all doors. In this sentence, a series of verbs make the figure vivid.

5). Existence process

Existential process refers to the process of existence or occurrence, such as *"there was an endless round of institutions, municipal and eleemosynary,..."* *"There were many easy ways of doing this."* In this novel, these sentences representing the process of existence not only enrich the sentence patterns, but also play a role in connecting the story.

6). Speech process

Speech process refers to the process of speaking. This novel also has a large number of sentences of speech process, which makes the character image fuller and promotes the development of the plot at the same time.

Example 10: "where's the man that done that?" inquired the officer excitedly.

"Don't you figure out that I might have had something to do with it?" said Soapy, not without sarcasm, but friendly, as one greets good fortune.

Example 11: "now, get busy and call a cop," said soapy" And don't keep a gentleman waiting."

"No cop for youse," said the waiter, with a voice like butter cakes and an eye like the cherry in a Manhattan cocktail. "Hey, Con!"

The above three sentences are the character dialogue in the second half of the text. Compared with the first half of the text, the second half uses the form of dialogue to convey information. Using the conversation between the speaker and the receiver can not only convey the content of the speech to promote the development of the story, but also convey the character of the speaker and the receiver and the changes of the image in the development of the story.

3.2 Interpersonal function analysis

Interpersonal function is one of the three meta functions of functional grammar, which is composed of mood and modality. Mood is composed of subject, limiting element and residual part. The interpersonal meaning embodied in mood is first borne by the subject. In the functional grammar systemic, “subject” is different from the subject in the traditional sense. It is an entity for which the speaker is responsible for the reliability of his proposition or

proposal. Modality is classified according to the objects exchanged. In order to distinguish the meaning of modality involved in different exchanges, modality can be divided into “modality”. In view of our analysis of the dialogue in the target text, that is, the object of exchange is news, and modality refers to the reliability from the perspective of possibility or regularity. It is realized by judgmental adverbs and some judgmental expressions. Using the mood, modality and evaluation systemic of interpersonal function, this paper analyzes the main body and end of the is short story. It can be seen that Soapy and almost all parties in communication are carried out under the premise of violating or distorting the interpersonal function. The humorous effect lies in various abnormal propositions and reflects various social relations contrary to the convention. The only time Soapy followed the rules was that he was with the police at the church, creating an abnormal outcome that Soapy who was determined to be a good guy, was arrested. While people shed tears on the fate of Soapy and his fellow characters, they also reflect on the morbid world in which they live.

3.3 Textual function analysis

O.Henry's works are short but ingenious, and their writing style is unique. They often connect the impossible together, and the ending of his works is often unexpected. Therefore, it is called O.Henry's ending. His works better promoted the development of American literary creation and had a far-reaching impact on it. O.Henry's *The Cop and the Anthem* is a short story. This article has a very complete plot. It not only describes some trivial things, but also depicts Soapy's absurd behavior, and deeply satirizes the sick world he lived in at that time with a humorous style. The following will be a comprehensive interpretation and analysis of the whole cohesion of the short story from the perspective of discourse function in functional linguistics.

Cohesion of textual ellipsis. Cohesion in an article is a writing technique that reasonably combines some words and various sentences. This cohesion technique is a common surface phenomenon in a text. In the formation of a text, cohesion is not only one of the important features of the text, but also one of the essential conditions. In the target text, a large number of words and sentences expressing time and place are used.

The logical cohesive function of discourse. In the cohesion and coherence of discourse, Hu Zhuanglin said: "Cohesion in a text is between those adjacent sentence groups or between two adjacent sentences. The cohesion between them is generally completed by connecting sentences, so that readers can more clearly understand the relationship between different sentence groups and sentences, and sometimes the semantics of the latter sentence can be obtained through the logical inference of the previous sentence." The cohesive words mentioned above include not only the cohesive words used in sentence grammar, but also the prepositions and adverb phrases with certain connective meaning we often use. Cohesion in discourse basically includes four main forms: cause, turn, time and supplement.

From the micro point of view, this novel applies time and supplement of discourse connectives. The author adds some modal particles to deeply show the characteristics of the characters and make the mood of the context more coherent. In terms of time implication of connectives in discourse, the text generally involves the sequence of time and event development. The author does not pile up some irrelevant and useless things at will, but integrates the text in order and orderly with the help of certain connectives to effectively reflect the development of events. These connectives have proper coexistence and tight time relations.

From a macro perspective, the transition is adopted from the beginning to the development, then to the climax, and finally to the end. This is also a prominent feature in O.Henry's works, that is, the ending is often unexpected. Before the end, Soapy did so many absurd things, but he was not punished. Instead, he was finally arrested by the police for an unexpected reason when he confessed in church. From the macro level of the development of the story plot, it belongs to the transition connection. Therefore, it can be seen that the author's arrangement is very ingenious.

4. Conclusion

For the reason that different people have different ideas to decode language, there are lots of relevant theories available to linguists for analyzing literary text which is available for numerous people. However, in the case interpretation of *The Cop and the Anthem* the above three meta functions provided by Halliday's systematic functional grammar theory are appropriate and objective in a way for digging out the style and deep meaning of the text. Furthermore, it is really available to use the theories of SFL on the analysis of literary text.

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