THE ANALYSIS OF INTERPERSONAL MEANINGS OF 'THE BLACKER THE BERRY', A NOVEL OF WALuLACE THURMAN

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Abstract

This study was conducted to answer a question: how the interpersonal meaning of the novel is realized. The analysis of the text was represented by the analysis of interpersonal meaning of the novel by using appraisal system offered by Martin and Rose (2003) more particularly the identification of three kinds of attitude: affect, judgement, and appreciation. The findings on the identification of three kinds of attitudes –affect, judgement, and appreciation- showed that there were more negative feelings expressed than the positive ones, more negative characters judged than the positive ones, and more negative things appreciated than the positive ones. This study has no direct contribution in language education but there was still an indirect pedagogical implication, as an invitation for English teachers to analyse various kinds of texts.
Keywords: analysis, interpersonal meaning, novel, appraisal, attitude, affect, judgement, appreciation.

A. Introduction

Discourse competence has become the most important competence that has to be mastered by the learners of a language. Since 2004 the focus of language learning is not on isolated sentences anymore but it has been removed to a text. This is due to the fact that 'the competence of producing and understanding sentences in isolation does not help learners much to communicate – to get involved in both oral and spoken discourse' (Rukmini, 2010: 1).

In fact, there is a greater expectation for English teachers nowdays, who are at once as discourse analysts. While the teachers can further ask whether the grammar helps learners to understand and produce texts, the discourse analysts can ask how the grammar sheds light on how the texts make meaning. In Gerot and Wignell's view (1994: 6), SFL attempts to describe language in actual use. It focuses on texts and their contexts. It concerns not only with grammar but also with how the grammar constructs meaning. It starts with the question, 'How are the meanings of the text realized?' for it views language as a resource for making meaning.

In my view, this study is a bridge which hopefully can relate education, literature, and linguistics. Honestly, the choice of the novel is due to literary interest. 'The Blacker the Berry' is a 1929 novel by Harlem Renaissance author Wallace Thurman. It tells the story of Emma Lou Morgan, a dark-skinned African-American woman, who encounters discrimination by lighter skinned African-Americans, beginning in Boise, Idaho and ending in Harlem, New York. 'The Blacker the Berry' is one of the most influencial novels, even controversial. For the first time in a novel, Wallace Thurman openly explored color prejudice in the black community. There have been

plentiful reviews and even criticisms addressed to both this novel and the author. Unfortunately, none of them were carried out linguistically since there is no linguistic evidence supporting them. Corresponding to this consideration, it is reasonable to conduct an analysis on 'The Blacker the Berry' _a novel of Wallace Thurman.

This study was limited on the interpersonal meanings realized in the novel by using appraisal as discourse system offered by Martin and Rose (2003). In other words, the analysis of ideational meanings, e.g. by using ideation or conjunction, and the analysis of textual meanings, e.g. by using identification or periodicity, were not analyzed here. This was due to the fact that the novel, which stirs up the emotion of its readers, is harvesting the interpersonal meaning so much more than the ideational meanings and the textual meanings. Furthermore, the analysis of interpersonal meaning by using appraisal devices was particularly limited on the kinds of attitudes - affect, judgement, and evaluation- without amplifying attitudes and source of attitude since the analysis of interpersonal meaning is sufficiently represented by merely analyzing kinds of attitudes.

B. Literature Review

Discourse analysis means 'a variety of procedures for examining chunks of language, whether spoken or written (Allwright and Bailey, 1991 as stated in Saleh, 2008: 75). Discourse analysis is also defined by Phillips (2005: 5) as an interrelated set of text and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, which brings an object into being. Eventhough diverse methodological approaches are involved in the study of discourse analysis, all of them are committed to language in context.

Similarly, discourse analysis is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used (McCarthy, 1994: 5). Still, Cameron (2001: 13) suggests that discourse should be studied as language in use, that is 'what' and 'how' language communicates when it is used purposefully in particular instances and contexts. Thus, language is used to mean and to do something and this 'meaning' and 'doing' are linked to the context of its use.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach provides a very useful descriptive and interpretive framework for viewing language as a strategic, meaning-making resource. The analysis of texts as authentic products of social interaction becomes the focus considered in relation to the cultural and social context in which they are negotiated. Following Halliday (1985), Eggins (1994: 1) suggests that SFL is applied to understand the quality of texts: why a text means what it does and why it is valued as it is.

Furthermore, when the components of the semantic system are systematically related to social context, there are three components of social context realized as summarized by this following table (Halliday, 1978: 189):

Component of Social Context	Functional-Semantic Component through which typically realized
Field of social process (what is going on)	Experiential
Tenor of social relationship (who are taking part)	Interpersonal
Mode of symbolic interaction	Textual

(how are the meanings exchanged or what part the language is playing in the situation under consideration)	

The theory used as the tool of data analysis here comes from the theory of Appraisal system offered by Martin and Rose (2003: 22-65). Appraisal is a system of interpersonal meanings, the resources of which are used to negotiate social relationships. When the author tells the readers how he/she feels about things and people, actually, he/she also tells the readers what his/her attitudes are. Apprisal basically deals with evaluation comprising the kinds of attitudes negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved, and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned. This following figure sets out the system network of appraisal, in which the enclosing options for appraisal are all selected at the same time. This is due to the fact that when an attitude is expressed, it is also chosen how amplified it is and what its source is. While, attitude gives three alternative options: either affect or judgement or appreciation.

However, not all appraisal systems were used as the tool of analysis of this study. It merely used kinds of attitude. Attitude is the feelings and values which are negotiated with readers (Martin and Rose, 2003: 22). It has to be concerned with three kinds: expressing emotion or people's feeling (affect), judging characters (judgement), and valuing the worth of things (appreciation).

Firstly, Affect is a resource for expressing people's feelings or emotions (Martin and Rose, 2003: 24-25). It varies in two general ways. It can be positive (good feelings) or negative (bad feelings) and it can be realized directly or implicitly in text. Direct and implicit realizations often work together to establish the mood of

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phases of discourse. Affect could be directly expressed through emotional states and physical behaviour, while it could be implicitly expressed through extraordinary behaviour and metaphor.

Secondly, judgement is a resource for judging people's characters (Martin and Rose, 2003: 24-25). Judgement, similar to affect, can be positive or negative, and explicitly or implicitly judged. But, different from affect, judgements can be personal and moral. Personal judgements can be positive (admiration) or negative (criticism). Also, moral judgements can be positive (praise) or negative (condemnation).

Thirdly, appreciation is a resource for valuing the worth of things (Martin and Rose, 2003: 24-25). Appreciation of things, as with affect and judgement, can be positive or negative.

C. Method of Investigation

Related to its aim, this study is reffered as a qualitative-descriptive research in which qualitative-descriptive method were used in collecting the data, analyzing the data and presenting the findings. The research unfolded the text under the analysis qualitatively and then described the realization of interpersonal meanings descriptively.

The data source of the study primarily came from the text of a novel written by Wallace Thurman, The Blacker the Berry, whose genre is African-American Literature. It was firstly published in New York by the Macaulay Company in 1929. The novel consists of five parts -Emma Lou (Part 1), Harlem (Part 2), Alva (Part 3), Rent Party (Part 4), and Pyrrhic Victory (Part 5). The data for text analysis were the clauses, phrases or words found

in the text that contain attitudinal implications as the appraisal devices.

The data was collected by mainly reading and intensively re-reading the text of the novel in order to get a comprehensive understanding of its content. It became the basis for further steps of the study. Then, the text of the novel was broken down into clauses or chunks manageable for analysis.

In analyzing the data, each of the clauses or chunks was analyzed using the appraisal system offered by Martin and Rose (2003). In this way, the text was approached from a more specific unit of analysis -clause by clause and then phrase to phrase- to the smallest one: words of appraisal devices used to realize interpersonal meanings.

The interpersonal meanings realized through phrases and words of appraisal devices used in the text to express attitudes and feelings as the unit of analysis in this study were analyzed by following some steps below:

1. Identifying and breaking down the text, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, into individual clauses. In this step, two or more clauses joined together in a clause complex were then broken down into individual clauses.

2. Analyzing each clause based on the appraisal system network which is on kinds of attitudes as described in theoretical framework. First, the affect of people's feeling or emotion was analysed by using the following eight kinds of identification:

    a. Positive – direct – emotional state

    b. Positive – direct – physical expression

    c. Positive – implicit – extraordinary behaviour

    d. Positive – implicit – metaphor

e. Negative – direct – emotional state

f. Negative – direct – physical expression

g. Negative – implicit – extraordinary behaviour

h. Negative – implicit – metaphor

Next, the judgement of people's characters was analysed by using the following eight kinds of identification:

a. Personal – admire – direct

b. Personal – admire – implied

c. Personal – criticize – direct

d. Personal – criticize – implied

e. Moral – praise – direct

f. Moral – praise – implied

g. Moral – condemn – direct

h. Moral – condemn – implied

Finally, the appreciation of things was analysed by using the following two kinds of identification:

a. Positive

b. Negative

D. Discussion

The text analysis as the first part of CDA was represented by the analysis of interpersonal meanings of the novel using Appraisal system. It more particularly negotiated three kinds of attitudes: Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation. In other words, by using the resources of Appraisal, the author's attitudes were negotiated, too. Actually, there are five parts of 'The Blacker the Berry':

Emma Lou (Part 1), Harlem (Part 2), Alva (Part 3), Rent Party (Part 4), and Pyrrhic Victory (part 5). However, Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation were negotiated orderly from each major setting: started from Boise (Idaho), continued with Los Angeles, and ended with Harlem (New York).

Story of a novel involves the readers in people's feeling more than any other family of genres. It was previously stated in the review of related literature that Wallace Thurman translated his experiences as a black man from an unusually white state into the character of Emma Lou. Like him, Emma Lou went to the University of Southern California, and like him, Emma Lou sought her fortune in New York. But he is a man. Technically, Emma Lou's feelings were identified from eight classifications: positive–direct–emotional state, positive–direct–physical expression, positive–implicit–extraordinary behaviour, positive–implicit–metaphor, negative–direct–emotional state, negative–direct–physical expression, negative–implicit–extraordinary behaviour, negative–implicit–metaphor.

The Blacker the Berry is not a happy story. It can be concluded from the findings that the negative feelings which were expressed by Emma Lou both directly and implicitly were more than the positive ones. To sum up, both positive and negative feelings were mostly expressed by Emma Lou directly through emotional states, instead of directly through physical expression or implicitly through extraordinary behaviour and metaphor.

The readers empathize and sympathize with the characters of the story since they take part in extraordinary events. The author of 'The Blacker the Berry' _Wallace Thurman_ negotiates his social relationships, by telling the readers how he feels about the main character of the novel _Emma Lou Morgan_ as well as the society around which

he lived. Technically, the judgement of Emma Lou's character was identified from eight classifications, so was the other minor characters: personal–admire–direct, personal–admire–implied, personal–criticize–direct, personal–criticize–implied, moral–praise–direct, moral–praise–implied, moral–condemn–direct, moral–condemn–implied. From setting to setting, Emma Lou's character was judged first, then followed by the minor characters'.

From the whole settings of place of the story, in personality, Emma Lou's character was mostly admired impliedly when she won her pyrrhic victory. Still in personality, Emma Lou's character was mostly criticized impliedly when she won her pyrrhic victory, too. In other words, in personality, the character of Emma Lou was seldom admired and criticized directly. Moreover, in morality, Emma Lou's character was not either praised or condemned directly but condemned impliedly, most of which when she moved to live in Harlem (New York).

The interpersonal meanings of the novel one of which were realized through the analysis of appreciation of things were basically the basics to unmask the ideological stance behind the novel. The things appreciated by the characters in this novel was commonly about the quality of life of the main character of the story – Emma Lou – as well as the quality of life of the people in Boise (Idaho), in Los Angeles, and in Harlem (New York) in 1920s. Technically, the appreciation of things was identified from setting to setting, only from two classifications: positive and negative.

To sum up, the things which were appreciated negatively were so much more than the things which were appreciated positively. From the whole settings of place of the story, the things were positively appreciated most during Emma Lou's pyrrhic victory, in which she began working for Campbell Kitchen's family, living in the

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Y.W.C.A, teaching at a Harlem public school, and realizing that she had to leave Alva and his son. Whereas, the things were negatively appreciated most during the rent-party in which she felt disappointed with Alva's friends attending the party, rejected about her suggestions for Alva either to marry her or to live together with her, insulted by the midnight show at the Lafayette theater, left by Alva.

E. Conclusion

It can be concluded from the findings on the analysis of the text that 'The Blacker the Berry' is a sad story. From the entire three parts of the analysis of interpersonal meanings representing the text analysis – Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation– it was found from the identification of the whole story of the novel that there were more negative feelings expressed than the positive ones, more negative characters judged than the positive ones, and more negative things appreciated than the positive ones.

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