

An Analysis of Theme Progression in Wiliam Blake’s “Infant Joy”

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Abstract

This research investigates the realisation of any types of themes in William Blake’s poetry in which entitled *Infant Joy*. This study has analyzed the poem by studying the themes and rhemes then identifying each role of every themes. It is found that all types of themes in which are topical, interpersonal, and textual, are appeared in this poetry. There are five topical themes, four interpersonal themes and two textual themes. Making this poem is rich with the expression of happiness, affection, and well-wishing, showing a deep, intimate bond between the speaker and the child.

Keywords: Theme progression, theme-rheme structure, poetry

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menginvestigasi realisasi atas semua jenis theme dalam puisi William Blake yang berjudul *Infant Joy*. Penelitian ini telah menganalisa puisi William Blake dengan mempelajari theme dan rheme lalu mengidentifikasi setiap peran dari setiap theme. Dalam puisi ini, ditemukan bahwa semua jenis theme yang mana adalah topikal, interpersonal, dan tekstual, muncul di puisi ini. Terdapat lima topikal, empat interpersonal, dan dua tekstual. Ini membuat puisi ini kaya akan ekspresi dari kebahagiaan, afeksi, dan penuh harap yang menunjukkan ikatan yang intim dan dalam di antara pembicara dan sang anak.

Kata kunci: Proses theme, struktur theme-rheme, puisi

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a thought-holder that molds and strengthens faith and temper. Language is therefore a system of meanings realized via forms. From this vantage point, Halliday offers superior tools for describing literary effect through linguistic selections. This explains why language is utilized functionally, with words chosen based on the circumstance and the task at hand. A unified, complete, and systemic model of language is provided by functional systemic grammar for the analysis of various literary texts. Language is viewed as a dynamic collection of options that a writer or speaker might employ in a range of social circumstances when using systemic functional grammar. Moreover, Bloor and Bloor (2004) argue Language use may be divided into three categories: (1) to organize; (2) to allow communicator participate in communicative acts to other people; (3) to relate what is said in written text to the rest of the text.

Language may be expressed both orally and in writing. Information must be communicated, especially when it is written, by taking into account a number of factors that might help the writing be clear and relevant. Language is seen by functional grammar as a tool for meaning-making. These grammars emphasize text and its context and make an effort to represent language as it is really used (Linda & Wignell, 1995).

The Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory is about the functional language notion. Language is a set of systems and interlinked options for creating meanings. In this case, what is considered to be meaningful is 'clause', grammatical unit of analysis, and 'text' is the result of combination of clauses to give a larger message. Halliday (1994) states that, in lexico-grammatical level, there are three metafunctions in which are identified and those are ideational, interpersonal, and textual. In ideational, one constructs what they experience in the choice of lexico-grammatical in order to represent the world. While in interpersonal, social relations are enacted and conveyed to those who receive the message whether through oral or written (Paltridge, 2006). In textual, the message presentation is organised by creating relevant context. It is about the clause system of thematic, which include the theme and rheme, and focused to the clause as a message. Matthiesen (1995) stated that textual metafunction aids those who read and listen in order to comprehend the ideational and interpersonal features in the text.

Halliday (1994) argues that theme is one component of a certain structural arrangement that, when combined, arranges the clause as a message. Meanwhile, rheme comes after the theme. It is about the theme and rheme configuration. One message consists of the combination of theme and rheme in written expression conveys complete meaning or context. Furthermore, Thompson (2014) states in the systemic functional linguistic approach, theme is one of the clause structure elements that organizes the information in sentences to help them make sense. Moreover, Subiyanto (2019) states an explicit embodiment of the text's textual element or metafunction is the rheme-theme structure. Therefore, thematic progression is crucial to for the readability and clarity of a text.

Poetry is a type of writing whereby human feelings and concepts are skillfully expressed via language (Efendi, 2021). It is an artistic expression in the literature in which the purpose is to express the ideas, sentiments, and life encounters. The diction used in a poem is to provoke the reader's emotion as it is creating a memorable experience.

Born in London, 28 November 1757, William Blake was the son of a craftsman. He is a visionary artist, poet, and painter and popular for the way he mix spirituality and creativity at that time. He is also known as the lunatic. Blake's intricate philosophical theories, which frequently contradict conventional wisdom, have had a profound influence on thinking and society in the 20th and 21st centuries, representing a contemporary reworking of ancient Gnosticism (Otto, 2019).

There are several previous studies related to the thematic analysis, and William Blake's poetry. Putri and Rosa (2020) examine the use of theme in students' discussion texts written by the second-year students of English Department in Universitas Negeri Padang. Sulastri (2022) analyzed the theme rheme in the short story entitled "2050". Another theme rheme analysis in short story is from Dashela (2021) in which analyzed the pattern in Sleeping Beauty. Purba and Pasaribu (2021) investigate the kind of thematic progression of the descriptive text written by students in SMP Swasta Sultan Agung Pematangsiantar. While Syahrizal et al. (2018) research aims to describe the pattern of thematic

progression in students' writing. Rezita and Maisarah (2023) studied the figurative language and central theme in William Blake's poems.

METHOD

This study employs descriptive qualitative in which without drawing any generalizations, the researcher gathered, categorized, examined, and concluded based on the data analysis. Qualitative research is investigating and comprehending what people or groups believe to be a social or human issue is the goal of qualitative research. It is employed to ascertain the cause and mechanism of a social phenomenon (Cresswell, 2009). This study also use theory from Bloor and Bloor (2004) in exploring the implementation of thematic development in one of the William Blake's poetries entitled *Infant Joy*. Moreover, the theme-rheme structure of SFL textual analysis model is adopted in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In *Infant Joy* poem written by William Blake, there are 12 lines and 2 stanzas. It is found that there are three types of themes and those are topical, textual, and interpersonal. The poetry is written as follows:

Infant Joy

I have no name

I am but two days old.—

What shall I call thee?

I happy am

Joy is my name,—

Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty joy!

Sweet joy but two days old,

Sweet joy I call thee;

Thou dost smile.

I sing the while

Sweet joy befall thee.

Topical Theme

The topical theme is about the main topic of the clause or sentence. Usually, the last theme in a multiple theme is the topical theme. Thus, the topical theme found in this poetry as follows:

Joy and Affection

Table 1 "I happy am"

I happy am	
I	Happy am
Topical Theme	Rheme

Table 2 "Joy is my name"

Joy is my name	
Joy	Is my name
Topical Theme	Rheme

Table 3 "Sweet joy befall thee"

Sweet joy befall thee	
Sweet joy	Befall thee
Topical Theme	Rheme

The table 1, 2, and 3 shows that the speaker expresses the feeling of the newborn child as in which is happiness. It is shown in the line "Joy is my name" and "Sweet joy" that highlight the happiness.

Emotional Interaction

Table 4 "Thou dost smile"

Thou dost smile	
Thou	Dost smile
Topical Theme	Rheme

Table 5 "I sing the while"

I sing the while	
I	Sing the while
Topical Theme	Rheme

The table 4 and 5 shows the emotional interaction between the speaker and the child. Those are depicting a reciprocal exchange of joy and affection.

Interpersonal Theme

The appearance of this theme can be more than one for a single clause. It is also about the interaction between the speaker and the listener. It can be seen in the following data:

Expression of Affection and Joy

Table 6 "I happy am"

I happy am	
I	Happy am

Interpersonal Theme	Rheme
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Table 7 "Joy is my name"

Joy is my name	
Joy	Is my name
Interpersonal Theme	Rheme

Table 6 and 7 shows that the speaker, which is the baby, express the emotional state by communicating the happiness.

Table 8 "Sweet joy befall thee"

Sweet joy befall thee	
Sweet joy	Befall thee
Interpersonal Theme	Rheme

The speaker expresses a wish for the listener's well-being, indicating caring and protective relationship.

Direct Adress and Question

Table 9 "What shall I call thee?"

What shall I call thee?	
What	Shall I call thee?
Interpersonal Theme	Rheme

The speaker asks the listener about what speaker should call the listener. This is creating an intimate and interactive tone.

Textual Theme

The textual theme focuses on how the text is organized including cohesive devices and how ideas are and how ideas are connected throughout the poem:

Simple Declarative Sentences

Table 10 "I happy am"

I happy am	
I	Happy am
Textual Theme	Rheme

Table 11 "Thou dost smile"

Thou dost smile	
Thou	Dost smile
Textual Theme	Rheme

The table 10 and 11 is clearly a declarative, providing clarity and directness. These simple structures help maintain the poem's focus and enhance its readability.

CONCLUSION

The theme development in *Infant Joy* by William Blake has three types of themes in which are topical, interpersonal, and textual. As for the detail, there are five topical themes, four interpersonal themes and two textual themes. This poem is rich with the expression of happiness, affection, and well-wishing, showing a deep, intimate bond between the speaker and the child. Moreover, it is focuses on the joy of the newborn child, the process of naming, and the emotional connection between the speaker and the child, establishing a clear and coherent subject matter.

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