A Functional Style Analysis of Tokyo Trail by the Register Theory

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Abstract:

Based on the register theory, one of the most important theories of systematic functional linguistics, the paper analyzed a famous bout of Tokyo trail, happened in 1946, in which the International Military Tribunal for the Far East severely punished those responsible for the horrible war of aggression. Firstly, the author has given a brief introduction to the register theory and the meta-functions. Then, she focused on the accuse aiming at exploring the relationship between its register and the meta-functions on the lexical and grammatical levels. Besides, the paper also reviewed the speech function and interpersonal function of the text in order to reveal its linguistic features and instructive significance.

Key words: register, meta-function, speech function, interpersonal function

I. Introduction

The Second World War was a great disaster for people all over the world. The Chinese people suffered a lot and the perpetrators of the disaster could not escape justice. On December 16, 1945, the international military tribunal for the Far East was formed by 11 countries, including the United States, China and Britain. In the military court, Japanese war criminals were trialed according to the military court charter. The whole trail lasted two years. Throughout the trail, the Chinese judges, headed by Mei Ruao, overcame various difficulties, sentenced the war criminals to the guillotine. For the first time in the international arena, the Chinese have successfully defended their dignity with legal weapons. Among the trails, the

most splendid victory of the Chinese inspection team was Ni Zhenghao's cross-examination of the whole ten days of Seishirō Itagaki. The questions mentioned in Itagaki's reply were questioned and refuted one by one, and he finally defeated Kenji Doihara, another Japanese war criminal leader who always kept silent by making a feint to the east but attacking in the west. From the perspective of systematic functional theory, this paper tries to analyze the text of the judgement to show the meaning of style and the embodiment of language in this trail.

II. Register Theory and Metafunction

2.1 Definition of Register Theory

Register theory, as one of the important theories of systematic functional linguistics, is widely used in many fields. According to its characteristics and functions, linguistics have different definitions of its concept. The dictionary of language and linguistics defines register as a variety of language with a specific purpose. Hatim (1990) defined it as a tendency to make a language behavior applicable to a particular type of activity. On the other hand, Halliday & Hasan (1985/89:41) took it as the variation along with the use. Because people will encounter countless different situations in real life, in a specific context, people will use a corresponding type of linguistic structure.   There is a potential relationship between situation types and the meaning of language. As a result, a variety of language variants are produced in the language, which is the so called register. Linguists believe that register is composed of the following three linguistic categories:

1)   scope of discourse; 2) the style of discourse; 3) the way words are spoken. Namely field, tenor and mode. They are the three disguised forms of situational context and contribute to the formation of different types of situations and thus produce different text types, which is the register.

Linguists consider that the above three categories cannot be separated since they are closely related to the scope of language variety. Various registers have different stylistic features which are determined by the form of register (grammar and vocabulary). However, different registers have a lot in common. A large number of grammatical and lexical features are interlinked even in diverse registers. Halliday took language as a potential form of meaning. The actual use of language is restricted by three contextual factors: discourse scope, discourse tone and discourse mode. Specifically, the scope of discourse restricted the conceptual function of language, while interpersonal functions are confined by discourse tone as well as textual function of language is limited by discourse mode. The study of register can help people to understand the way language words and judge the context of communication.

Now let's analyze the relationship between the three situational varieties and metafiction three grammatical and lexical levels.

2.2 Field

Field refers to the things that happen in the course of language communication, the activities that are carried out, the results that are discussed, or the experiences that are expressed, etc. It can embody the communicative purpose and function of the language user in the specific situation context. In this section of the trial, Ni Zhengao, as a Chinese lawyer, provide strong question to Seishirō Itagaki, the prisoners of the war. He denied all the accusations made by the prosecution and argued that out of friendship, he had helped the Chinese Northeastern people, and he himself always advocated to a peaceful truce by withdrawing troops. But Ni hadn't been swayed by Itagaki's arrogance and he argued vigorously for a strong administration of Itagaki's crimes. We can learn the scene and situation from the following dialogue by using some related words.

The premeditation on 918 incident.

(Ni）You just said that the <u>September 18th Incident</u>, also know as battle on September 18th in 1931, was never <u>premeditated</u>, no conspiracy, is that correct?

（Itagaki）Yes

（Ni）However, you admitted earlier that the Japanese <u>Guandong Army</u> did <u>formulate</u> the battle plan before the <u>Huang Gutun Incident</u>.. Did you not agree to it?

（Itagaki）I need to explain…。

（Ni）I don't want to hear your explanation. My question is: did you <u>report</u> this <u>battle plan</u> to the central comment and they did approve it.

（Itagaki）Yes.

（Ni）Then, how can you perpetrate your statement of no <u>premeditation</u> and conspiracy of September 18th Incident?

This dialogue is Ni's question about Itagaki's participation in the planning and implementation of the 918 incident which constructed a field for the conversation. In this dialogue, there are plenty terms about time, place and event, such as *"September 18th Incident"，"Guandong Army"，"Huang Gutun Incident"*. With these proprietary words, it is easy to know what the context and topic of the conversation is. And through Ni's language, we can also see the process of the event. Ni countered Itagaki's and to grasp the facts which he had previously admitted, making Itagaki's denial contrary to his admission. By not giving Itagaki's a chance to argue, he indirectly admitted his crime. Thus, the purpose of the speaker is achieved.

2.3 Tenor

Tenor is the relationship between the speaker and the victim, as well as the speaker's communicative intention. There are two kinds of tenor: personal tenor and functional tenor. Personal tenor could be used in a intimate relationship such as couples; on the contrary, it also could be found among distant relationships. Functional tenor might be instructional or illustrative. In court, the tenor of a lawyer, as a defense or as a supplier, is personal. In the Tokyo trail, Ni is as the prosecution lawyer of China against Japan, and the receiver is Japanese war criminal. Their relationship is antagonistic. Therefore, the style he used was formal, stiff and distant. In order to make a strong charge against the criminal and win the support of the judge, Ni must use very sharp language, so that the criminal do not have the chance to fight back.

For example:

（Ni）*In your defense brief, you've stated the during the negotiations for the Tri-Power-Accord, between Japan, Germany and Italy, you did abdicate expanding the war. In addition, when the Zhang Gufeng Incident occurred on the border between China and Soviet Union, you tirelessly thought a peaceful solution, is that correct?*

（Ni）*As the result, your Emperor punished you for your actions, is that correct?*

（Ni）*I'm the one asking questions here, not you! Now answer me, isn't that right?*（Ni）*Your emissary's purpose was to entice them to participate the puppet organization you are trying to set up, is that right?*

In this part, Ni used rhetorical questions *"is that right and is that correct"*, a total seven times, which left Itagaki no room to breathe. Ni pressed Itagaki so hard that Itagaki had to admit a great deal of facts. At the same time, let the hearers in the court have a clearer understanding of the facts and felt that the criminal couldn't deny what happened. They will give a lot of recognition from the bottom of their heart. From functional tenor, Ni's interrogation is illustrative because Ni had stated plenty facts and made the criminal realized his crime. The audiences and the judges knew the truth of the matter, so as to give the right judgement.

2.4 Mode

The mode of speech refers to the medium or channel of language activity, which may be oral, written or somewhere in between. According to the formality, Hou Weirui summarized mode as spoken and written, informal and formal.

As for he used criminals cross-examination language in the court, it should be written in advance of the draft, orally expressed in the court and frequently rise to the reaction of the other side improvise. Therefore, it has a dual characteristic of spoken and written expression.

2.4.1 Colloquial Style

1) We can find the modal particles in the following dialogue to feel the feature of colloquial style language. For instance: Oh, well, then.

   2) A large number of colloquial language can show, oral communication is relatively simple, casual, and short sentenced characteristic.

You just said that…

Did you not agree to it?

The information on hand? What information?

Now answer me.

These are common spoken sentences, and some even don't conform to the rules of grammar. But in spoken English they are perfectly acceptable and fell more direct and powerful.

2.4.2 Written Style

As the formal language of a court of law, the relationship between the two communicative parties is often estranged. As the same time, the even discussed is a political topic, which bears the feature of solemnity and seriousness. Although it is expressed verbally, it is not entirely arbitrary. We can observe this from the use of some words and sentences. Many very formal words are used in this conversation. Such as *"usurped the position of mayor of Shen yang"; "instate the puppet emperor Pu Yi"; "fraternized with Japanese Guan dong Army"*.

We can find out that the use of these verbs is technical and common in military warfare. Through the use of these words, we can also see the event is of a major, and the seriousness of the crimes.

3. An analysis of speech function

The systemic functional school holds that language is the product of human activities. As a tool of human communication, it bears a variety of functions. Halliday divides the metafunction of language into three kinds: ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function. The three metafunctions of language are closely related to each other and play an indispensable role in the process of language use. However, both the ideational function and the interpersonal function are ultimately reflected through the function of textual function. From the perspective of textual function, we will analyze the linguistic meaning of the accusation.

The trail was one of the most spectacular victories of the whole trail is because that Ni had use the language skills, such as the use of diversionary practices, crushed the enemy with one blow. Regarding accusation of Itagaki, Ni's words killed two birds with one stone. Let's take a look at this crucial dialogue.

（Ni）Oh, well, do you at least remember whom you sent? Was that person none other than one who usurped the position of mayor of Shen yang , instate the puppet emperor Pu Yi , fraternized with Japanese Guan dong Army, plotted to bring self-rule to North China, instigate the independent movement in the Inner-Mongolia, and incited traitor everywhere to set up puppet government and traitorous organization, never hesitate to do evil, and now sits on defendants' table namely Kanji Dohihara (土肥原贤二). Is that him? Answer me.

In this part, the speaker is trying to identify new information by using known information.

Information is the message that the speaker conveys to the addressee. Information unit is the basic component of information communication which has a certain structure. Known information usually refers to the information that has already appeared in speech activities, or that can be inferred from the context. But the components that have not appeared in the speech activity or are difficult to judge according to the context are called the new information. Prior information and new information interact to form the structure of the information unit. That is, there must be one piece of new information in each unit of information, otherwise the unit of information is incomplete, while the known information can be traded off. We can analyse the known and new information in this paragraph.

In the first clause *"Oh, well, do you at least remember whom you sent?"* the new information is *"you"*, and *"whom you sent"* is the known information. So, this sentence is trying to make Itagaki admit that he has done this by sending someone he knew and remember. In the sentence, the speaker uses new information as a starting point in order to emphasize and element or achieve an aim.

The second clause in this paragraph shares similarity with the first one.

"as that person none other than one who usurped the position of mayor of Shen yang , instate the puppet emperor Fu Yi , fraternized with Japanese Guan dong Army, plotted to bring self-rule to North China, instigate the independent movement in the Inner-Mongolia, and incited traitor everywhere to set up puppet government and traitorous organization, never hesitate to do evil, and now sits on defendants' table namely Kanji Dohihara"

Among it, *"that person"* and *"the one"* are the new information, and the following attributive clause contains the known information. Most importantly, in the second half of the clause, *"sits on defendants table"* is the new information, and *"namely Kanji Dohihara"* is the known information. Itagaki and Dohihara are birds of a feather and they planned the invasion of China together. Since they are very familiar with each other, Itagaki must have known what Dohihara did. In such a question, Itagaki could not deny what he knew. In this way, Dohihara's crime was admitted by Itagaki, thus Dohihara could not escape his crime by keeping silent. From the above, analysis, we can understand the use of this speech function and the important reasons for the success of this accusation.

IV. Conclusion

By analyzing the Chinese lawyer and accusers' speech in the Tokyo trail, this paper makes readers understand the features of discourse function from the register level and the speech function. The relationship between the features used and the meaning conveyed in the language of this particular type of discourse has been revealed so   that it can be verified that the systematic and functional grammar, as a framework of discourse analysis, has a strong operability and practicability.

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