Investigating The Metaphorical Metafunction Images in Dylan Thomas's ''Do not Go Gentle into that Good Night'' in Terms of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics

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Abstract

This paper exposes metaphor in Dylan Thomas's "Do not Go Gentle into that Good Night". The poet motivates his father to rebel against his inevitable natural end "Death". Metaphor is a style of writing which introduces extra meaning further than literal words. It is a process of understanding some meaning throughout another. The repetition of the two core sentences is intended to strength the message of struggle against main theme "Death". The paper depends on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar to analyze data. The analysis has been done on the main ideational metafunction transitivity system processes such as material, mental, verbal and relational processes.

1. Introduction

Metaphor can be defined as a process of understanding some meaning throughout another. Most writers resort to use this technique in order to make comparison between something which is more concrete than another. Metaphor is a stylistic way of writing tries to make connection to those literally constructed concepts and make their figurative meanings more acceptable, depending on the rhetorical context (Crystal, 2008, p. 98).

Most speakers use metaphor as device which relies on words rather than actions, in other words it depends in great deal on verbal performance than physical performance. Metaphor serves to make communication based on fundamental source of evidence to the linguistic contribution (Lakoff and Johnsen, 2003, p.8). In English speakers can describe person, thing, place or action by mention another thing in spite of it is not truly that "another thing", just because metaphorical indication.

Metaphor mostly occurs in songs, poetry and everyday language, we cannot avoid it. The importance of metaphor in poetry is by exposing the readers to what the poet feels. It makes comparison between two different things have common feature. By metaphor the poet can portrait verbal images that help readers to make his ideas more cognitive.

When a poet uses metaphor to describe simile between two unlike things, it is an easy process to explain examples particularly by expressions (as, like). On the other hand some poems become vague and not fully understood if they have no clear explanation of metaphor. The best type of metaphor is sustained metaphor, because it serves the poem entirely and it can be identified easily. In the same time metaphor provides some kind of complexity if it is not used in an appropriate image. Metaphor is good if it conveys inner linkage which cannot be exposed by more average language.

In "Do not Go Gentle into that Good Night"; Dylan Thomas tries to show the strong relation between "Death" and "Night". The best way to understand metaphor is by paraphrasing or rewriting the poem. According to P.B. Shelley the language of poetry " is vitally metaphorical, that marks the before unapprehend relations of things and perpetuates their apprehensions". Metaphor can create new meanings, ideas and insights, because it is a vehicle to revitalize language. When a poet employs metaphor, he creates and restores an old ancient things and lost things. Language of poetry is vitally metaphorical, that signifies the relation of

things and apprehension. Metaphor has the ability to create new meanings and further insights which work as revitalizer of language (Hirsch, 1999, p.14).

Deignan (2005) defines metaphor as "a word or expression that is used to talk about an entity or quality other than the referred to by its core or most basic meaning" (Deignan, 2005, p.34). Metaphor is a style of writing that provides readers with extra meaning beyond words. It helps to transfer information of two subjects (target and source). For instance "that dark night" - in this poem under study "Death" – is the target, while "dark night" is the source (Yazdani et al, 2011, p. 67).

Metaphor represents literary device which combines different items of life together and get special meaning other than the ordinary ones of words. It makes correspondence between different conceptual domains.

We have to be aware that we understand world around us depending on stories and local narratives deeply initiated in memories since early childhood. These memories prepare our perceptions metaphorically of outer world. Narrators are interested in metaphorical images through language. Metaphors are tools of language that construct social world views by linking concrete forms with abstraction realities.

Literary metaphor can provide deep insights that supply suitable understanding of meanings, goals, and cultural systems. Metaphor gives multiple meanings that enhance the literary context and enriches understanding (Yazdani et al, 2011, p. 72).

How linguistic works can be conceptualized via capturing the idea of issue at one hand. On the other hand metaphor cannot be avoided; however it gives alternative meanings that make us distinguish utterances easily. It is noticeable that "Death" is essential theme in Thomas's poems. He deals with this topic in very direct way; the poet is intimately addressed to his father's death. "Do not go gentle into that good night" is full of passion and emotion; however, it is among the most successful poems. It is resonated strongly with the readers in such a different way than other obscure poems. Metaphor in this poem has pointed out to the dying father when he says "Rage, rage against dying of the light". Some critics suggest that Thomas does not mean his father, but the poet in fact addresses and convinces himself more than his dying father (Paivarinta, 2012, pp.115, 116).

According to some linguistic critics there is some kind of difficulty to differentiate between literary language and ordinary language because

metaphor sometimes is used to indicate meanings in literary and sense. The same expression could employ the same purpose of exposing meaning and enhancing readers to create good understanding (Yazdani et al, 2011, p. 73). Some linguists consider metaphor as heart blood of poetry, voice of protest heard clearly when he protests death in the two lines:

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Rage, rage against dying of the light.

Metaphor between light and darkness is represented by "old ages" which means the flame of life is "burn" implicates "die". It is very obvious that "day" means life, on the contrary "evening and sunset" represent "old ages" (Paivarinta, 2012, pp. 117,119).

2. Dylan Thomas and His Metaphorical Poem.

Knowing some important points in author's life can help readers getting clear depiction for literary work. Although the poet passed away relatively at a young age, but he is one of the influential literary figures during the last century. Some critics claimed that his poetry is concerned with issues of life and death rather than other social problems in such unique style. Other literary experts argued that Dylan Thomas was under the influence of his father's death when inspired to produce his poem "Do not Go Gentle into that Good Night". At the beginning of the poem, Thomas discussed several kinds of men and how those men had to face their death, while at the end he realized that every human had to face this inevitable and unstoppable natural end –Death- . Though this end could be challenged, "rage against the dying of the light".

Dylan Thomas was very influenced by his father who gave him love of literature. He loved his father deeply; whom he wrote this poem to. His father was ill for a long time without realizing that he was dying. Dylan could not show his father this emotional poem and the poem was published in America, only after his father's death. The poem begins with warning or command from the poet to the readers and especially to his father. He used two words "night" and "day" to refer to *Death* and *Life*, asking the readers to resist *Death* and grasp to *Life*. The poem deals with actions, it begins with verb (negative form). It encourages readers to revolute against *Death*, "rage, rage against the dying of light". The rejects that occurred through the poem are different.

The title of the poem is metaphorical by itself because of the poet's command to his father "Do not Go Gentle into that Good Night", Night – is an image of Death, the metaphor of "day" and "light" represents life. Dylan Thomas uses darkness or end of day to indicate death. Another depiction of "death" when the poet announces that those "old age" have to fight when he uses "burn and save" encounters "close of day" wildly as young men as. This poem includes many images that refer to death as "close of day" and "dying of the light".

Dylan Thomas shows metaphor when he says "Rage, rage against the dying of the light"- Light- represents sunset. Although both "death" and "setting of the sun" are natural phenomena, but the poet suggests people have to fight. Dylan Thomas argues that old men have to assert their lives until last moment. On the contrary he exposes paradox when he describes "wise men know dark is night", because they believe that they would die because death represents inevitable end to their existence and they should accept that natural part of life. Repeated words indicate the last mortal action in man's life that is "passing away".

To analyze "Do not Go Gentle into that Good Night" we have to expose Dylan Thomas's lexemes. He makes direct comparison of two unlike things "like" or "as", such as in fourth stanza "Blind eyes could blaze like meteors". Metaphoric images could be seen when Dylan Thomas personifies attributing human characteristics to inanimate objects, animals, or abstracts ideas, such as, "frail deeds deemed". Another metaphor when he makes comparison between two unlike things, such as, "dying of the light". A combination of words appears to contradict each other, such as, "blind eyes and fierce tears".

We can notice a paradox in statement that seems contradict to reveal unexpected truth, such as, (night: day), (light: dark), and (good men: wild men). "Do not Go Gentle into that good Night" is a poem about "life" and "death". The poet uses the word "night" in the first stanza and he repeated it four times in the poem as whole. The word "night" has the sense of "darkness", moreover, it refers to "death". Dylan Thomas tends to express the meaning of weakness and may be death when he uses specific words such as crying, frail and dying. Each stanza of this poem has words which carry meaning of life and death.

In fact language exposes its main problems in cognitive level through metaphoric attempts. Metaphor is sometimes a paradox because it tries to

affirm and expose an identity on one hand whereas it denies it on the other. It is a way to justify relation between causes and results. Metaphor might rearrange the stored information and that could affect the reader's cognition. Language could not remain unaffected during different periods, that makes cognition also changed and words have new meanings used in different metaphoric conditions.

The poet used many figures of speech to support the theme of the poem. The poem is based on two sunset metaphors (day and night). The themes (life and death) appear in the poem by using different lexeme such as (day and light) or (night and dark). Also, there is some lexeme that refers to place, such as (bay and height) to serve the theme of the poem particularly it seems they are related to (earth and sky). All words like (meteor, height, and sun in the flight) refer to sky, or things that still keep distance from earth. On the contrary words as, (grave, bay and wave) are related to earth.

The way the poet embodies imagery is distinct and literary rich, it is highly self-reflexive. Thomas has the ability to personify abstract images as realization metaphor; however he links ideas to real identities (Paivarinta, 2012, p. 163).

In general, many lexemes are used to refer to nature, this indicates the poet has an overwhelming theme through the whole world. The number of paradox in the poem is very noticeable. This is resulted because of contrast between life and death; there is a mix between life and death. The poet tries in some occasions to glorify death by using words as (good, night, bright, dark, sad height, etc.) The lexical set (good night) may have two meanings. The first one refers to the frequently used expression that people say to each other in night which has also the meaning of good bye. The second one refers that the poet expresses death in a bad and terrible way. "Good Night" commonly is a phrase which is said as "Good bye" besides that it could refer to how the poet's father slips into his final sleep and never wakes up again.

Most of the time poets use metaphor to focus on particular concept. In some cases limited conceptual language merely impoverishes the poem and its linguistic form in addition the meaning is still as it is delivered at risk. With metaphor it is unpredictable whether the linguistic structure is acceptable or not. Using metaphor has an advantage that readers can access and use their metaphorical knowledge and their experiences to interpret the unseen expressions in good way (Philip, 2005, 16).

This poem is about all people whether good or wild should fight seriously against death whenever it approaches them. Some serious people are developed suddenly to " blinding sights " to explain that even blind eyes have the ability to " blaze like meteors and be gay ". The metaphorical comparison between blind old eyes or described as blind just because they do not have the ability to see truth. On the other hand the meteors as burning and blazing as their light is disappeared. The word " light " is a metaphorical device for life itself as long as " close of day " is a symbol for death which is called " good night ".

Should old ages burn and rave at close of day? Old age is used as a metonymy refers to old men. They should burn with power strength, (close of day) is one of the many reference to death. Lexeme that represents parallel ideas as (wise men, good men, wild men and grave men) all of them rage against death.

There are two references to sea wave and bay. The colour (green) represents the force of the preceding stanza. The poet tries to explain that good men respond gently to death. Another kind of men are wild men, they can refer to strong men who used their power in bad manner. Those men (caught and sang the sun in the flight).Sun and flight refer to sky. It could refer to the power and highness they gained in the life. Another metaphor in this poem is (grave men), they refer to men who are dying. They can see with blinding sight. This depiction may have two images; the first one is that grave men can see. Things that ordinary human cannot see. The second one is grave men can see with blinding sight. Blind eyes could blaze the meteors and be gay.

When we want to study "metafunction" we have to approach systemic functional linguistics which is one of language properties. This property of language is considered semantic oriented rather than syntactic oriented. Grammatical forms could be elaborated in relation to their functions in language. (Halliday, 2003, p. 436)

Each language varies in human manipulation in every context. M.A.K Halliday argues that languages are shaped in respect to three main functions. Halliday classified these three functions as " ideational, interpersonal and textual". Sometimes ideational function of language can have sub-functions as (experiential and logical). Halliday suggests that metafunction explains how language works, he considers function as " a fundamental property of language itself"' (Halliday, 1985, p. 17)

If linguists want to get appropriate idea about how could metaphorical expressions be used in daily language provide clear insight into the metaphorical nature of what we are talking about. They have to take in their consideration how conception of that metaphorical image is reflected our daily contemporary language (Lakoff and Johnsen, 2003, p.11)

We can imagine that the poet suggests metaphor of "war", vocabulary of war as (burn, sight, fierce tears, and grieved) as if he was talking about war. As far as metaphorical expressions in our daily language are highly tied to metaphorical conception, so that we may use metaphorical linguistic items to investigate the metaphorical considerations and get explanation of metaphorical interpretations of our activities (lakoff and Johnsen, p.11).

3. Methodology

3.1 Metafunction in Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar

Halliday deals with logical function of language as, "which set up logical-semantic relationships between one clausal unit and another" (Halliday, 2003, p. 17). Halliday classifies metafunction of language into three main kinds in (SFL) Systemic Functional Linguistics. These three kinds are identified as (ideational, interpersonal, and textual) function of language. Halliday states that meanings are highly related to their experiential functions which he describes as ideational function. Ideational function of language is about the content of language, sense of words, and consciousness.

The second function of language is interpersonal function that enables the speakers to create their interpersonal relations. Interpersonal function of language represents the social function of language particularly relations between speakers and hearers to express their personal attitudes. Also, interpersonal function of language reflects the relation between the text-author and the text-reader (Bilal, 2012, p. 726). This sort of linguistic category depends on the tenet that speakers are not talking about their experience, but simultaneously they construct interpersonal relations which are the core of human's survival (Halliday, 2003, p. 16).

Halliday suggests that ideational and interpersonal functions are combined with textual function. Textual function means all the grammatical systems that organize fluency of discourse. This function is responsible for creating discourse management. Textual function of language is different from ideational and interpersonal functions since its target is the language itself.

Halliday argues that throughout textual function, language can create its distinctive semiotic own world. Halliday suggests that throughout processing of human experiences language is evolved (Halliday, 1999, p. 355). Textual function of language is about realizing the text structure and cohesion. It is related to the verbal world, the construction of particular information in a particular text (Bilal, 2012, p. 726).

Moreover, Ruqaiya Hasan considers metafunction in systemic functional linguistics "are not hierarchized; that have equal status, and each is manifested in every act of language use: in fact, an important task for Grammarians is to describe how the three metafunctions are woven together into the same linguistic unit" (Hasan, 2009, p. 9).

Metafunction works in every utterance, ideational function of language is related with experience. Experiential function of language refers to suitable grammatical options that qualify speakers to make significations about the outer world and inside them (Halliday, 2003, pp.15-16). Metfunction of language provides deep understanding of the text, in other words, it explains the hidden-self side of characters throughout their utterances and intentions (Bilal, 2012, p. 732).

3.2 Data Analysis

Figure of Speech	Example
Simile	Blind eyes blaze like meteors
Metaphor	Night, day, bay, old men who caught and sang in flight, blinding sights, blind eyes, sad height, dying of the light
Personification	Old ages should burn and rave ….. Frail deeds might have dance,
Collocation	Old ages, Good night, dying of the light, close of day, their frail deeds, fierce tears
Paradox	Night-day, light-dark, good men- wild men, cry-sang, Dance-grieved, curse- bless, bay-bright
Metonymy	Old age
Pun	Dying of the light, dying of delight

Table (1): Figurative Language of the Poem

جامعة البصرة/ كلية الآداب/المؤتمر العلمي السنوي التاسع لسنة ٢٠٢١
العلوم الانسانية والاجتماعية ـ الواقع ـ التحديات ـ الحلول

قسم الترجمة

Material	Mental	Verbal	Relational
Do not go gentle Into that good Night X (4)	Dying of the Light	Rave at close of Day	Blind eyes ….. Be gay
old ages should burn	know dark is right	Curse…	
Rage against the Dying of the Light X (4)	Wild men who Caught… the Sun in flight	Bless, me now	
crying how bright	And learn… they Grieved it on its Way	Words had Forked no Lightning	
Their frail deeds Might have Dance	Grave men, who See with blinding Sight	I pray	
blind eyes could blaze			

Table: (2) Transitivity Processing

Process Type	Frequency	Percentage

جامعة البصرة/ كلية الآداب/المؤتمر العلمي السنوي التاسع لسنة ٢٠٢١
العلوم الانسانية والاجتماعية ـ الواقع ـ التحديات ـ الحلول

قسم الترجمة

Material	12	52.1%
Mental	5	21.7%
Verbal	5	21.7%
Relational	1 / total=23	4.3%

Table: (3) Processes' Final Percentages

3.3 Discussion:

Sometimes metaphor can be understood according to the embodiment imposed by ordinary techniques. In fact linguistic metaphorical expressions are often complex from the other's point of view (Coulson and T. Lai, 2014, p. 147).

The poem describes the atmosphere of death throughout imaginary visual concepts such as "lightening" and "wave" to describe the reaction of "good men", "wise men" and their own attitudes if they face death. The poet uses metaphors, collocation, personification and simile as literary devices. The obtained results from the above data analysis show that the poem has (23) main clauses, some of them are repeated for four times as " Do not Go Gentle into that Good Night" and "rage, rage against the dying of the light".

These (23) main clauses have been divided into four process types as Material process which gained the first level with (12) occurrences and the highest percentage which is (52.1%). The second and third processes are Mental and Verbal, both of them have the same occurrences which is (5) times, and their percentages are (21.7%). The fourth process is Relational which occurs only once (1) and that gives its (4.3%) percentage.

The above simplified mathematical discussion explains that the metaphorical images in this poem mostly depend on material process in order to make the reader comprehend and get the intended meaning more clearly. Material images simplify further mental rational perception. Imaginative metaphor can influence world view by ideas transported via words and notions; indeed certain ideas could be out of control. A poet focuses on specific hidden view by recalling aspects of common social philosophy.

The debatable question is that "Why does Thomas want his father do not go "gentle"? Why he wants him to fight? It seems that Dylan Thomas considers the best way to avoid death is facing it strongly; he wants his father to be powerful like a "wild hero". This struggle will embrace death and serve a noticeable triumph at the end, in other words "if you can't avoid

dying, it's better to go down fighting it to not fight at all!" If you have not another choice to avoid death, then it is honorable to fight than to not fight (Robinson: 2019)

4.Conclusion:

This research depends on Dylan's Thomas's "Do not Go Gentle into that Good Night" from the metaphorical perspective on Halliday's (SFL). The powerful metaphorical meaning of the poem" *Do not go gentle into that good night"* has three different evoking metaphors for the subject of the poem which is Death. The tittle of the poem gives three conceptual metaphors. The first metaphor is "Go" which refers to "Death", which is kind of departure. The second metaphor is "night" which refers to "Death" because it represents "Darkness". The third one is "Gentle" that exposes "Life" as if "Life and Death" have a struggle and the result is death gives up that struggle (Coulson and T. Lai, 2014, p. 140).

The significant metaphor when Thomas announces "close of day" which means death, on the other hand he tells people to "Burn" since burning represent light. Dark and Light emphasize the contrasted ways between death and life. This juxtaposition will influence readers to perceive that the idea of life is full of power and energy. The tragic fact for human aging is death which picks vitality of life.

Thomas classified men into (wise, good, wild, grave and his own father) and mentioned them in separated stanzas and described them with their own unique ways to face death. It is true that life is short and death waits them all. Importance of fighting against one's death is a clear purpose of being alive. Human have not obey to die immediately, they should resist death since they could not achieve their wishes and what they could have during their lives.

"Blind men" although they cannot see now or they have lost their ability to see in presents, but they have the ability to see their already past by their memories. Their clear memories will reflect the joy of their life despite they are now "blind old men".

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Appendix 1
Do not go gentle into that good night
Dylan Thomas (1914-1953)
Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lighting they
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight,
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and by gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.