
THREE META-FUNCTIONS IN “THE POWER OF LOVE” SONG BY CELINE DION: A FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTIC APPROACH

Yusup Supyani¹, Maulida Nur El Matiin²

¹Sastra Inggris Universitas Putra Indonesia yusup.supyani26@gmail.com

²Sastra Inggris Universitas Putra Indonesia maulidanurel@gmail.com

Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze the song lyric of Celine Dion song “The Power of Love” with systemic functional linguistic approach. Theories applied in this research were three meta-functions, namely interpersonal function, ideational function and textual function from Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), Emilia (2014), and Supyani (2024). The method applied in this research was a qualitative method to describe, analyze and interpret three-metafunctions occurring in the song lyrics of Celine Dion song “The Power of Love”. The data were collected by reading the lyrics of Celine Dion song, identifying three meta-functions, analyzing and interpreting three metafunctions including interpersonal function, ideational function and textual function. As a result of this analysis, the researchers found out that the majority of the song lyric used relational process and topical unmarked theme, which indicated that the song lyric of Celine Dion song was concise and meaningful.

Keywords: *Meta-functions, Ideational Function, Interpersonal Function, Textual Function*

1. Introduction

Almost every day and every time, we hear the songs around us. It cannot be separated from our life and in fact, it is a music which is written out and has rhyming words. The song comprises musical note and words which people know as lyrics. Lyrics have greater power in the song since they convey the messages and feelings of the songwriter. Supposing the listeners do not comprehend the meaning of the lyrics, it is difficult for them to understand the message in the song lyrics. For this reason, it is important that the song lyrics of Celine Dion “The Power of Love” be analyzed and interpreted by systemic functional approach. Systemic functional linguistics is the source of meaning making, so that the social context could be seen in three meanings, which are called meta-function. Halliday states that functional components...are the components of the language system which correspond to the abstract functions of language-to what I have called ‘meta-functions’, areas of meaning potential which are inherently involved in all uses of language. These are what I am referring to as ideational, interpersonal and textual; generalized functions which have as it were built into language, so that they form the basis of the organization of the entire linguistic system (Halliday, 1974, pp. 93-94). In short, metafunction is simultaneous meaning which consists of three language functions, namely interpersonal function, ideational function and textual function.

The interpersonal meta-function investigates the relationship between semantic interaction organization and grammatical difference in clause Mood structure (Egins, An

Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics, 2004). Mood is one of the essential interpersonal components in a clause since it allows for interaction through speech functions such as statements, questions, offers, and demands (Derewianka & Jones, 2016; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Martin & White, 2005). Those speech functions are stored by three syntactic Moods, namely declarative, interrogative and imperative as well as implemented by grammatical choices (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

The ideational meta-function deals with representation of experience or content expressed in language: all the doing, sensing, being, saying activities in the world (Emilia, 2014). Part of the experiential metafunction is Transitivity system, since it is concerned with the ways "content" or experience expressed in language. Therefore, transitivity is expressed within clauses, and it is realised in three language items: the process itself (which must be present) which is expressed in the verbal group, the participants (if they are present) which are expressed in nouns or noun groups and any associated circumstances (where they are present) which are expressed in adverbial (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Emilia, 2014; Supyani in Kemala & et.al, 2024).

The textual metafunction deals with organizing language to make connected and coherent discourse (Emilia, 2014). The realisation of textual metafunction of language is the Theme system as proposed by Halliday. In English, new information is usually presented in the second part of the clause, that is Rheme, where the Theme is developed and as the writer or speaker typically depart from the familiar to head towards the unfamiliar, the rheme typically contains unfamiliar or "new" information (Eggins, An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics, 2004). There are three different types of Themes: topical Theme, interpersonal Theme and textual Theme. Topical Theme is relevant to the experiential meta-function, interpersonal Theme the interpersonal meta-function and textual Theme to the textual meta-function (Eggins, 1994; Halliday, 1994).

Some scholars conducted researches on Three Meta-function on song lyrics (Nisrina & Nasrudinilah (2021) analyzed a work of children's literature with systemic functional linguistics approach. ideational, textual, and interpersonal meanings are analyzed from the short story entitled "Jack and the Beanstalk" accessed from British council for kids; (Pertama, Rukmini & Bharati (2018) analyzed the verbal language that represents three metafunctions in the textbooks. The second is the checklist table for visual image analysis by applying the theory of Van Leeuwen; (Metekohy (2021) identified and analyzed the ideology of the song as portrayed through words and action of the protagonist in this song.

This study analyzes the song lyric of Celine Dion "The Power of Love" using the Systemic Functional Linguistics approach to find out interpersonal meta-function, ideational meta-function and textual metafunction in the song.

2. Method

This study applied a descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research is descriptive data in which the data is collected in the form of words or pictures rather than variety by Bogdan & Biklen (2007). The data for this study were taken from a song lyric by Celine Dion 'The Power of Love'. The main focus of the research was the three

meta-functions in Systemic Functional Linguistic, namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. The “Power of Love” song lyric would be broken down into several parts in accordance with the clause. Each clause’s ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings would then be analyzed and the result of each clause would be presented in the form of tables followed by the understandings based on the data from the tables.

3. Results and Discussion

In this section, the researcher provides results and discussion of the research. The data of this research are clauses which comprise three meta-functions, namely interpersonal function, ideational function and textual function.

[Verse 1]

The whispers in the morning
 Of lovers sleeping tight
 Are rolling by like thunder now

Simplex

The whispers	in the morning	of lovers sleeping tight	are rolling by	like thunder	now
Subject	adjunct	adjunct	finite	Predicator	Adjunct
Actor	Circumstance: time	Circumstance: matter	Process: Material		Circumstance: manner
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme				
Mood	Residue				

As I look in your eyes

Simplex

As	I	look	in your eyes
∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator
∅	Behaver	Process: Behavioural	
∅	Circumstance: matter	Rheme	
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
∅	Mood	Residue	

[Verse 2]

I hold on to your whole body

Simplex

I	hold on	to your whole body
Subject	Finite	Predicator
Actor	Process: Material	Circumstance: Matter
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
Mood	Residue	

And feel each move you make

Simplex

and	feel		each move	you	make	
∅	finite	predicator	complement	subject	finite	predicator
∅	Process: Mental (Affection)		Phenomenon	Actor	Process: material	
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)		Rheme			
∅	Mood	Residue				

Your voice is warm and tender

Simplex

Your voice	is		warm and tender
Subject	finite	Predicator	Complement
Carrier	Process: Intensive		Attribute
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
	Mood	Residue	

A love that I could not forsake

Simplex

A love	that	I	could not forsake	
Complement	∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator
Circumstance: Matter	∅	Actor	Process: Material	
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Rheme			
Residue		Mood	Residue	

[Chorus 1]

'Cause I'm your lady

Simplex

Cause	I'	m		your lady
∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
∅	Carrier	Process: Intensive		Attribute
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
∅	Mood		Residue	

And you are my man

Simplex

and	you	are		my man
∅	Subject	finite	predicator	Complement
∅	Carrier	Process: Intensive		Attribute
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
∅	Mood		Residue	

Whenever you reach for me

Complex

Whenever	you	reach	for me
----------	-----	-------	--------

∅	Subject	finite	predicator	Complement
∅	Actor	Process: Material		Goal
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
∅	Mood		Residue	

I'll do all that I can
Simplex

I'	ll do		all	that	I	can	(do)
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	∅	Subject	Finite	Residue ∅
Actor	Process: material		goal	∅	Actor	Process: material ∅	
Theme: Topical: Unmarked	Rheme						
Mood		Residue					

[Verse 3]

Lost is how I'm feeling
Simplex

Lost	is		how	I'	m	Feeling
Subject	finite	predicator	∅	Subject	finite	Predicator
Carrier	Process: Intensive		Attribute			
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme					
Mood		Residue	∅	Mood		Residue

Lying in your arms
Simplex

lying		In your arms
Finite	Predicator	Complement
Process: Material		Circumstance: Matter
Rheme		
Mood	Residue	

When the world outside's too much to take
Complex

When	the world	outside'	s		too much	To take
∅	Subject	Complement	finite	predicator	complement	predicator
∅		Circumstance: Place	Process: intensive		Circumstance: manner	Process: Material
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme				
∅	Mood	Residue				

That all ends when I'm with you
Simplex

That all	ends	when	I'	m	with you
----------	------	------	----	---	----------

Subject	Finite	Predicator	∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Actor	Process: Material		∅	Carrier	Process: Intensive		Attribute
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme						
Mood			Residue				

[Verse 4]

Even though there may be times

Simplex

Even though	there	may	be	times
∅	Subject			
∅				
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
∅	Mood		Residue	

It seems

Simplex

It	seems	
Subject	Finite	Predicator
Carrier	Process: Intensive	
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
Mood		Residue

I'm far away

Simplex

I'	m	far away
Subject	Finite	Predicator
Carrier	Process: Intensive	
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
Mood		Rheme

Never wonder where I am

Simplex

Never	wonder	where	I	am
Adjunct	Finite	Residue	∅	Subject
Circumstance: Time	Process: Mental		∅	Carrier
Theme: Topical (Marked)			Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme
Mood		Residue	∅	Mood
				Residue

'Cause I'm your lady

Simplex

Cause	I'	m	your lady
∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator
Complement			

∅	Carrier	Process: Intensive	Attribute
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
∅	Mood		Residue

And you are my man

Simplex

and	you	are	my man
∅	Subject	finite	predicator
∅	Carrier	Process: Intensive	Attribute
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
∅	Mood		Residue

Whenever you reach for me

Complex

Whenever	you	reach	for me
∅	Subject	finite	predicator
∅	Actor	Process: Material	Goal
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
∅	Mood		Residue

I'll do all that I can

Simplex

I'	ll do	all	that	I	can	(do)
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	∅	Subject	Finite
Actor	Process: material		goal	∅	Actor	Process: material ∅
Theme: Topical: Unmarked	Rheme					
Mood			Residue			

[Bridge]

The sound of your heart beating

Made it clear suddenly

Simplex

The sound	of your heart beating	made	it	clear	suddenly
Subject	Adjunct	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Complement
Agent/Attributor	Circumstance: Matter	Process: Cause		Carrier	Circumstance: Manner
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)			Rheme		
Mood			Residue		

The feeling that I can't go on

Is light years away

Simplex

The feeling	that I can't go on	is	Light years away
Subject	Adjunct	Finite	Predicator
Complement			

Carrier	Circumstance: Matter	Process: Intensive	Attribute
Theme: Topical (Unmarked)		Rheme	
Mood		Residue	

[Chorus 1]

'Cause I'm your lady

Simplex

Cause	I'	m		your lady
∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
∅	Carrier	Process: Intensive		Attribute
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
∅	Mood		Residue	

And you are my man

Simplex

and	you	are		my man
∅	Subject	finite	predicator	Complement
∅	Carrier	Process: Intensive		Attribute
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
∅	Mood		Residue	

Whenever you reach for me

Complex

Whenever	you	reach		for me
∅	Subject	finite	predicator	Complement
∅	Actor	Process: Material		Goal
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
∅	Mood		Residue	

I'll do all that I can

Simplex

I'	ll do		all	that	I	can	(do)
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	∅	Subject	Finite	Residue ∅
Actor	Process: material		goal	∅	Actor	Process: material ∅	
Theme: Topical: Unmarked	Rheme						
Mood		Residue					

[Chorus 2]

We're heading for something

Simplex

We'	re	heading	for something
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct
Actor	Process: Material		Goal

Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme
Mood	Residue

Somewhere I've never been

Simplex

Somewhere	I'	ve	never	been
Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Adjunct	Predicator
Circumstance: Place	Carrier	Circumstance: Time Process: Intensive		
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
Mood			Residue	

Sometimes I am frightened

Simplex

Sometimes	I	am	frightened
Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Predicator Complement
Circumstance: Time	Carrier	Process: Intensive	Attribute
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme	
Mood		Residue	

but I'm ready to learn

Of the power of love

Complex

but	I'	m	ready	to learn	of the power of love
∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Predicator Complement
∅	Carrier	Process: Intensive		Attribute	
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme			
∅	Mood		Residue		

[Refrain]

The power of love

The power of love
Complement
∅
Rheme
Residue

The power of love

The power of love
Complement
∅

Rheme
Residue

Sometimes I am frightened

Simplex

Sometimes	I	am		frightened
Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Circumstance: Time	Carrier	Process: Intensive		Attribute
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
Mood			Residue	

but I'm ready to learn

Of the power of love

Complex

but	I'	m		ready	to learn	of the power of love
∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Predicator	Complement
∅	Carrier	Process: Intensive		Attribute		
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme				
∅	Mood			Residue		

[Outro]

The power of love (Ooh-ooh, ooh)

The power of love	(Ooh-ooh, ooh)
Complement	Complement
∅	∅
Rheme	
Residue	

As I look into your eyes

As	I	look		in your eyes
∅	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct
∅	Behavior	Process: Behavioural		Circumstance: matter
Theme: Topical (Marked)	Theme: Topical (Unmarked)	Rheme		
∅	Mood		Residue	

The power of love (The power of love)

The power of love	(The power of love)
Complement	Complement
∅	∅
Rheme	

Residue

The power of love

The power of love
Complement
∅
Rheme
Residue

From the data above, it can be seen that the song lyric of Celine Dion “The Power of Love” comprise mostly relational process, namely intensive with topical unmarked themes. The song lyric is designed and written in simpler way to help the listeners understand the lyric and the message that was meant to be delivered by the lyricist.

The lyricist makes intensive use of relational processes “intensive” to show the state of being and assign the quality of the lyricist or the character in the song lyric. The events are explained in a simple and understandable way. Material and mental processes are the most used after relational process, indicating that the song lyric describe what the lyricist or the character physically do and think or feel. Lastly, verbal and existential processes are not very common since if the song lyric applies the process it projects second order representations of experience and only represents experience.

Themes in the song lyric are not constant. Almost every new clause features a new theme, which is different from before. It might be difficult for the listeners to comprehend and interpret the song lyric. Also, we can see that most of the themes used in the song lyric are topical unmarked, indicating that the clauses are made simple and straightforward. Throughout the entire song lyric, the only mood that can be found is declarative since this is logical that the song lyric meant to be sung and enjoyed. Thus, there are no other interpersonal interactions required.

4. Conclusion

In Systemic Functional Linguistics, it focuses on three meta-functions, namely the ideational, textual, and interpersonal meanings. Ideational meta-function deals with representation of experience. The interpersonal meta-function deals with negotiating and maintaining relationships with others. The textual meta-function does with organizing language to make connected and coherent discourse. In the song lyric “The Power of Love” by Celine Dion, relational processes and topical unmarked themes are the most common features which can be found out. It indicates that the lyricist made an intention to write a simpler and meaningful song lyric. The song lyric describes the love story of two lovers and reveals the power of love. The researchers expect that this SFL analysis could be useful for anyone who is interested in SFL analysis.

References

- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen. (1982). *Qualitative Data Analysis : A Sourcebook of New Methods*. California: Sage.
- Derewianka, B., & Jones, P. (2016). *Teaching Language in Context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eggin, S. (1994). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. London: Printer, Publishers, Ltd.
- Eggin, S. (2004). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. Continuum.
- Emilia, E. (2014). *Introducing Functional Grammar*. Bandung: PT. Dunia Pustaka Jaya.
- Halliday, M. (1974). *Interview with M.A.K. Halliday*. In Perret, H., Ed., *Discussing Language*. The Hague: Mouten.
- Halliday, M. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (2nd ed.). London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M., & Matthiessen, C. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Halliday, M., & Matthiessen, C. (2014). *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar* (4th ed.). London & New York: Routledge.
- Supyani, Y. (2024). *Determining Process Types*. In Kemala, Z., & et.al. (2024). *Buku Ajar Functional Grammar*. Padang: Hei Publishing.
- Martin, J., & White, P. (2005). *The Language Evaluation: Appraisal in English*. Palgrave.
- Metekohy, M. E. (2021). Halliday's Language Metafunction on Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody". *Prologue: Journal on Language and Literature*, 7 (1), 40-48. Retrieved from https://prologue.sastra.uniba-bpn.ac.id/index.php/jurnal_prologue
- Nisrina, J. A., & Nasrudinilah, M. (2021). Functional Grammar Analysis: Three Meta-functions in Jack and the Beanstalk. *International Journal of Systemic Functional Linguistics*, 4 (2), 33-39. doi:10.22225/ijlsl.v4i2.4354
- Pertama, T., & et.al. (2018). Implementation of Three Metafunctions in Verbal Language and Visual Image of Students' Textbook. *English Education Journal*, 8 (4), 418 - 431. Retrieved from <http://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/eej>