

A Textual Analysis of Verbal Texts in the Children's Picture Books

Debby Yolanda¹⁾

Dian Marisha Putri²⁾

T. Silvana Sinar³⁾

tengkusilvana@usu.ac.id

Abstract: The purpose of our study was to discover textual metafunction elements of the verbal text in one of the children's picture books entitled *On the Move*, part of the *Wonderful World of English* series. The data used in this research were lingual data of words, phrases taken from the particular picture book. The descriptive qualitative method was used in analyzing the data. The results of the study showed that the dominant element of the textual metafunction was topical themes and there were relations between textual elements and visual elements in making meaning from these children's picture books.

Keywords: *metafunction, theme, rheme, children's picture books*

Abstrak: Tujuan dari penelitian kami adalah untuk menemukan elemen metafungsi tekstual dari teks verbal di salah satu serial buku anak-anak bergambar, *Wonderful World of English* bernama *On the Move*. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kata dan frasa lingual yang diambil dari buku bergambar tersebut. Dalam menganalisis data digunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa elemen dominan dari meta fungsi tekstual adalah tema topical dan adanya hubungan antara elemen tekstual dan elemen visual dalam pembuatan makna pada buku anak-anak bergambar ini.

Kata-kata kunci: *metafungsi, tema, rema, buku anak-anak bergambar*

¹⁾ *Student of English Literature Study Program, FIB, Universitas Sumatera Utara*

²⁾ *Junior lecturer of English Literature Study Program, FIB, Universitas Sumatera Utara*

³⁾ *Professor of English Literature Study Program, FIB, Universitas Sumatera Utara*

Children's picture storybooks play a foundational role in the lives and education of young children in several ways. Generally, children like picture books since they use very basic language, written with vocabularies which are easy to understand, making the reader loves literature. Simple language helps children to develop their reading skills. According to Nodelman & Reimer (as cited in Jalongo, 2004), there are at least three stories in these types of books: the one told by words, the one implied by pictures, and the one that results from the combination of the two.

Wonderful World of English is a picture book used for elementary level and has been used by the fourth year students of Yayasan Haji Maksum Abidin Sholeh in Stabat for learning English at school. The students are interested in reading these books. Even the first year in this school also can use these picture books. The texts are easy to read and suitable for beginners to learn. The story told in these books depends on the interaction between the text and its image.

This study aims at finding the meaning represented in the verbal texts in the pictures. It identifies the types of theme and rheme of the verbal modes in creating meaning. Two stories that are taken for analysis are *Sailing in the Sky* (page 4-5) and *The Great Mouse Race* (page 8-9). They present narrations that draw on linguistic and visual semiotic systems through the use of text and image. In picture books, there are two modes, written and visual.

Heberle and Constanty (2016), wrote an article that investigates how multimodal meaning-making resources in children's literature may contribute to develop readers' critical interpretative possibilities. In the study, they provide an analysis of the award-winning Brazilian wordless picture book *Bárbaro* (Moriconi, 2013) from a social semiotic perspective. Initially, based on Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), they used three metafunctions that are specifically related to: a) Ideational

Metafunction consisting of Experiential meaning for constructing experience, and Logical meaning for establishing logical relations, b) Interpersonal meaning for enacting social relations, and c) Textual meaning for organising the message. This article provides these metafunctions (representational, interactive and compositional meanings) in *Bárbaro*. This research uses similar analytical method as in the aforementioned article and also focuses on its textual meanings.

Results suggest that the analysis undertaken allows for the description of detailed information about the unfolding narrative, the sequence of events, characters' actions, attributes and emotions, as well as distribution of visual elements, among other features. The contribution of this research is as a guidance for the researcher to understand how the verbal and visual texts in children's picture book are analyzed using Halliday's, Kress and van Leeuwen's theories. Furthermore, this article helps the researcher to determine the verbal and visual text in picture book based on Visual Narratives proposed by Unsworth.

Systemic Functional Linguistic Theory

Systemic-Functional Linguistic Theory as known as SFLT is an approach to language developed mainly by M.A.K. Halliday in the U.K. during the 1960s and later in Australia. SFL explores how language is used in social contexts to achieve particular goals. It does not address how language is processed or represented within the human brain, but rather looks at the discourses produced (whether spoken or written), and the contexts of the production of these texts. Since it is concerned with language use, SFL places higher importance on language function (what it is used for) than on language structure (how it is composed). Social semiotics is concerned with the way people use semiotic resources" both to produce communicative artifacts and events and to interpret them ... in the context

of specific social situations and practices (van Leeuwen, 2005: preface).

Systemic Functional (SF) theory provides frameworks for detailed practices for analysing the meaning using the conceptual framework of the: a) Ideational Meta function consisting of Experiential meaning for constructing experience, and Logical meaning for establishing logical relations, b) Interpersonal meaning for enacting social relations, and c) Textual meaning for organising the message. The descriptions are as follows:

- a) **The ideational metafunction** is concerned with ideation, grammatical resources for construing our experience of the world around and inside us, in terms of transitivity system, a choice between the six processes (Material Process, Mental Process, Relational Process, Behavioral Process, Verbal Process, and Existential Process), and the participants and circumstances.
- b) **The interpersonal meta function** is concerned with the interaction between speaker and addressee, the grammatical resources for enacting social roles in general, and speech roles in particular, in dialogic interaction, for establishing, changing, and maintaining interpersonal relations. The building blocks of this semantic function configure as Subject, Finite, Predicator, and Complement.
- c) **The textual meta function** is concerned with the creation of text with the presentation of ideational and interpersonal meanings as information that can be shared by speaker and listener in text unfolding in context. The textual meta function is the component that enables the speaker to organize what he is saying in such a way that it makes sense in the context and fulfils its function as a message (Halliday 1973: 66). This meta function consists of two sub-functions, concerned with Theme and Rheme.

In this study, the focus of analysis is on the textual metafunction considering that clauses are messages in terms of the

departure point of message and the arrival point. The departure point of the message is called Theme and the arrival point is called Rheme. Theme provides the settings for the remainder of the sentence. Rheme is the remainder of the message in a clause in which Theme developed, that is to say, Rheme typically contains unfamiliar or new information. The interaction of Theme and Rheme governs how the information in a text develops.

The Theme can be divided into a number of categories: Topical, Textual and Interpersonal.

1) Ideational/Topical Themes

The ideational or topical theme is usually but not always the first nominal group in the clause. Topical theme divides into unmarked and marked.

- a. Unmarked topical theme is also a subject that refers to a nominal group or nominal embedded clause.
- b. Marked Topical Theme is a topical theme which is not as the subject of a clause. They are complement, circumstance, prepositional phrases, and process.
 - i. *Complement* functions as the complement of a process when it occurs in the initial position of a clause and constitutes a marked topical theme.
 - ii. *Circumstance*, when occurs in the initial position of a clause, functions as a marked topical theme.
 - iii. *Prepositional Phrase*, when occurs at the beginning of a clause, plays a role as a marked topical theme.
 - iv. *Process*: is said to function as a marked topical theme when it is used in the imperative, either positive imperative or negative imperative which is preceded by Don't or Never.

2) Interpersonal Themes

Interpersonal themes refer to any entity of the interpersonal meaning of

language occurring in the initial position of a clause. They are:

- a. *Finite*: any auxiliary used in the interrogative clause and it functions as the interpersonal theme.
 - b. *Vocative*: an address directed to a second person which functions as an interpersonal theme when it occurs in the initial position of a clause.
 - c. *Modal Adjunct*: when occurring before the topical theme of a clause it is said to function as an interpersonal theme.
 - d. *Comment Adjunct*: constitutes the comment of a speaker about what is going to be thematically expressed or about the content of the expression.
 - e. *Wh-element*: is used in the initial position of an interrogative clause.
- 3) Textual Themes

Textual themes refer to a word or group which functions to connect one clause with another to construct a text, such as:

- a. *Structural* (Conjunction) which functions to combine two clauses in either parataxis or hypotaxis and constitutes the textual theme of the clause.
- b. *Conjunctive Adjunct* which functions to provide linking relations between one clause and another.
- c. *Continuative* is a structural element which functions to make a discourse go on smoothly though by completely changing the field or simply filling the pause before getting ideas to continue.
- d. *Relative* also functions to combine two clauses by substitution of an entity with a relative.
- e. *Wh-element* in hypotatic clause functions as the textual theme of the clause.

METHOD

The data source of this article were taken

from children's picture books series namely Wonderful World of English published by World Book, Inc in 1994. Originally, this children's picture books consisted of five books. However, this research analyzed two stories from one of the serial books. The examined data were clauses appearing in the two stories which also consisted of the themes and rhemes,

First, the verbal texts were gathered from stories entitled 'Sailing in the Sky' and 'The Great Mouse Race' in the first book of Wonderful World of English series, namely *On the Move*. Then collection method was a document study.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Analysis on the 'Sailing in the Sky'

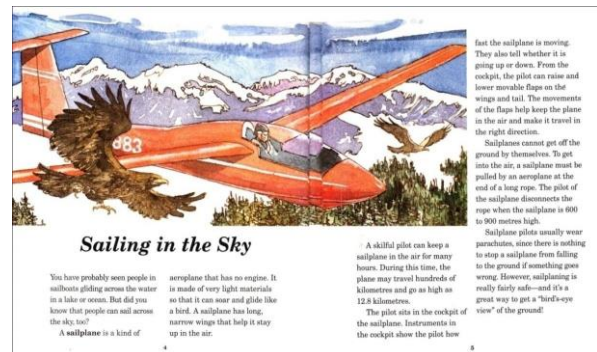


Figure 1. Sailing in the Sky story

The following analysis focuses on the Themes and Rhemes in the verbal text, and the visual narrative on the intermodal integration (layout), framing, and focus. There are 19 clauses that consist of 25 Topical Themes, 2 Interpersonal Themes and 12 Textual Theme. The text has main themes focused on a sailplane and a skilful pilot. From the data in Figure 1, it is found that the dominant theme is Topical Themes. This is depicted in the clauses, in which the nominal groups are as participants and prepositional phrase role as circumstances. Below are the verbal data (text) and the analysis from the story—Sailing in the Sky.

1.

You		have probably seen people in sailboats gliding across the water in a lake				
Nominal Group		Rheme				
Topical						
Theme						
But	did	You	know	that	People	can sail across the sky, too?
Structural	Finite	NominalGroup	Rheme	Structural	Nominal Group	Rheme
Textual	Interpersonal	Topical		Textual	Topical	
Theme			Theme			

2.

A sailplane	is a kind of aeroplane	that	has no engine.
Nominal Group	Reheme	Relative	Rheme
Topical		Textual	
Theme		Theme	

3.

It	is made of very light materials	so that	it	can soar and glide like a bird.
Nominal Group	Rheme	Structural	Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical		Textual	Topical	
Theme		Theme		

4.

It	is made of very light materials	so that	it	can soar and glide like a bird.
Nominal Group	Rheme	Structural	Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical		Textual	Topical	
Theme		Theme		

5.

A sailplane	has long, narrow wings	that	help it stay up in the air.
Nominal Group	Rheme	Relative	Rheme
Topical		Textual	
Theme		Theme	

6.

A skillful pilot	can keep a sailplane in the air for many hours.
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

7.

During this time,	the plane may travel hundreds of kilometers and go as high as 12.8 kilometres.
Circumstance	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

8.

The pilot	sits in the cockpit of the sailplane.
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

9.

Instruments	in the cockpit show the pilot	how fast	the sailplane	is moving.
Nominal Group	Rheme	Wh-element	Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical		Textual	Topical	
Theme		Theme		

10.

They	also tell	Whether	It	is going up or down.
Nominal Group	Rheme	Structural	Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical		Textual	Topical	
Theme		Theme		

11.

From the cockpit,	the pilot can raise and lower movable flaps on the wings and tail.
Prepositional Phrase	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

12.

The movements of the flaps	help keep the plane in the air and make it travel in the right direction.
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

13.

Sailplanes	cannot get off the ground by themselves.
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

14.

To get into the air,	a sailplane	must be pulled by an aeroplane at the end of a long rope.
Comment Adjunct	Nominal Group	Rheme
Interpersonal	Topical	
Theme		

15.

The pilot of sailplane	disconnects the rope	When	the sailplane	is 600 to 900 metres high.
Nominal Group	Rheme	Wh-element	Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical		Textual	Topical	
Theme		Theme		

16.

Sailplane pilots	usually wear parachutes,
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

17.

Since	there	is nothing to stop a sailplane from falling to the ground	if	something	goes wrong.
Structural	Nominal Group	Rheme	Structural	Nominal Group	Rheme
Textual	Topical		Textual	Topical	
Theme			Theme		

18.

However,	Sailplaning	is really fairly safe –
Conjunctive Adjunct	Nominal Group	Rheme
Textual	Topical	
Theme		

19.

and	it's	A great way to get a-bird's-eye view of the ground!
Structural	Nominal Group	Rheme
Textual	Topical	
Theme		

Sailing in the Sky is a story that shows the visual image about Sail plane. Sailplane is a kind of aeroplane that no has engine that it can soar and glide like a bird. There are signs for visual like mountain, trees, blue sky, a big sailplane with a pilot in the cockpit and two eagles that sailing in the sky.

An illustration of a sailplane is showed in a complementary layout, where visual and verbal have their own spaces and ordered in descending and adjacent position, weighing more to the image because the image occupying most half the pages. This layout intends the readers to look and read the image first and then the text. The image is bound without a frame [unframed]. The story world is contained to separated from the reader's world and may also serve to contain or confine the character where being limited by a margin. The focus of the image is centrifocal when compositional elements are around a center. And the extended:

triptych where the central element (sailplane) being accompanied by additional elements on either side (two eagles on the side). From the image without looking the text, the readers look a sailplane that has long and narrow wings like a bird. This directs the focus of the readers eyes to the sailplane and is related it to the text.

The text has themes focused on the sailplane and a skilful pilot. References to the sailplane occur eleven times. The themes, sailplane and the pilot, are in correspond with the image's focus. When the readers look at the story, the focus is directly on the image. The bold title of the text using font size larger than the text containing the story also directs the focus of the readers' eyes. This is the relation between the textual elements and the compositional elements where the text corresponds with the image. The puzzle of the order of the beginning story also pushes the readers to guess whether people can sail

across the sky or not. This is also supported by the layout and the framing of the image and text that ease the readers and do the guessing.

The Analysis of Story “The Great Mouse Race”

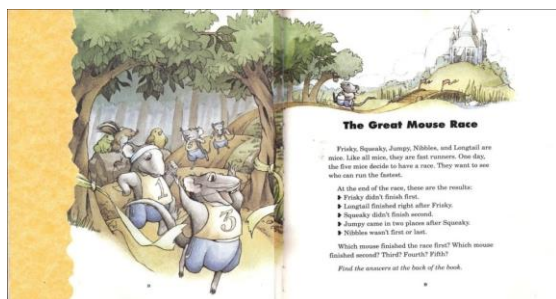


Figure 2 The Great Mouse Race

From the data in Figure 2, the dominant theme found is Topical Theme that consists of nominal group, circumstance, prepositional phrase and process. There are 16 clauses that consists of 11 Topical Themes and 5 Interpersonal Themes. The text has main themes focused on the mice and the race. Here below are the verbal data (text) and the analysis from the story -The Great Mouse Race.

1.

Frisky, Squeaky, Jumpy, Nibbles, and Longtail	are mice.
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

2.

Like all mice, they	are fast runners.
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

3.

One day,	the five mice decide to have a race.
Circumstance	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

4.

They	want to see can run the fastest.
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

5.

At the end of the race,	these are the results:
Circumstance	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

6.

Frisky	didn't finish first.
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

7.

Longtail	finished right after Frisky.
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

8.

Squeaky	didn't finish second.
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

9.

Jumpy	came in two places after Squeaky.
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

10.

Nibbles	wasn't first or last.
Nominal Group	Rheme
Topical	
Theme	

11.

Which mouse	finished the race first?
Wh-element	Rheme
Interpersonal	
Theme	

12.

Which mouse	finished second?
Wh-element	Rheme
Interpersonal	
Theme	

The story of -The Great Mouse Race talks about mice and race. As seen in Figure 2, there are signs for visual that shows about nature, castle, animals like bird, frog, squirrel, bumblebee and geese and the race of five mice. There are some numbers on the mice's clothes and the track starts from the big castle over the bridge and also the trees to the finish. This image also shows about the smallest mouse to the biggest mouse which running on the track to get the finish.

In this spread page, an illustration of a race is showed in a complementary layout, where image and text have their own spaces and ordered in facing each other horizontally where the image first then the text and adjacent position. The image is occupying more than one page. This layout leads the readers to read and find the image first and then the text. The image is unbound, there is in effect no boundary and the setting of the image fills the page. This gives the readers sense of involvement. The focus of the image is centrifocal that one whose compositional elements are polarized, horizontally and unbalanced. The image is reinforced by deictic vectors formed by the one of mice greet other animals. The mice that finished first and second are also portrayed bigger than the other mice, prompting the idea of a race. This directs the focus of the reader's eyes to the order of the mice and is related to the text.

The text has themes focused on the mice and the race. References to the mice occur eight times, once mentioning the rank of the mice. The race is also referenced by the mention of the rank such as -First? Second? The themes, mice and race, corresponds with the image's focus. The title of text is

bold and larger than the contents of the story. The puzzle of the order of the results also invites the readers to look back and forth between the image and the text. This is supported by the layout of the image and text which eases the readers to make a guess. The last two paragraphs (clauses 11 onwards) encourage the readers to guess and look for answers at the end of the book. This is also related to the framing of the picture, which clearly involves the readers.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the dominant themes from selected stories is topical theme, where there is also relation between the textual elements and the compositional elements in the children's picture books. The verbal and visual elements create meaning as well as support each other. Every story describes certain themes that correspond with the image's focus. Moreover, in some stories, there is a puzzle to the readers. Layout, the framing of the image and text also support and motivate the readers to look and guess. The images in the children's picture book also illustrate pictures like the verbal text.

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