A study on the structure of the speech "I have a dream" by Martin Luther King: a systemic functional grammar analysis = Nghiên cứu về cấu trúc bài diễn thuyết " I have a dream" của Martin Luther King: Phân tích theo quan điểm ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống. M.A. Thesis Linguistics: 60 22 15 / Nguyễn Thị Thanh ; Supervisor : M.A. Nguyễn Thúy Hương

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale of the study

Language, no matter how it is analyzed and assessed, is still produced due to human needs. Therefore, its structure and components are functional with respect to those needs (M.A.K Halliday, 1994). This leads to the fact that no language item is separate, each piece of it is evolved to the functions which are decided by humans in communication, and grammar is not an exception.

However, it seems that the process of teaching and learning the language tends to make a clear distinction between grammar and other linguistics areas, as in structuralism's perspectives. Functionalists, on the other hand, hold the belief that "Grammar should be seen as facilitating communication in all modes, not as an isolated area of study" (G. Lock, 1996).

As having the experience of drilling with a number of grammar exercises in schooling as well as being the teacher for many grammar classes, I am deeply interested in improving the language proficiency along with the structure accuracy for my students. That is the

reason why I have developed a great attention to Functional Grammar (or FG for short). The further I am absorbed in this linguistic aspect, the stronger my notion of its applications in language teaching and learning becomes.

Hence, I decided to conduct a study on the structure and meaning of the speech *"I have a dream"* by Martin Luther King - a systemic functional grammar analysis based on Halliday's functional grammar as the theoretical framework.

1.2 Aims of the study

In carrying out the research, the writer aims to:

- Illustrate the key concepts in FG
- Analyze the structure and meaning of the speech *" I have a dream"* by Martin Luther King
- Suggest some further implications for language teaching and learning

1.3 Scope of the study

It would be impossible for the researcher to cover the issues of FG. However, some important notions such as linguistic system, metafunctions and cohesion which are closely related to the study will be examined in detail.

1.4 Methodology of the study

The structure and meaning of the speech will be focused in the study, therefore the methodologies applied are:

- Descriptive which is used for illustrating the crucial matters of FG
- Analysis which is used for studying the speech

1.5 Data Collection

A various number of examples and illustrations have been extracted from functional grammar works by well known linguistics such as M.A.K Halliday (1985/1994), Thompson (1994), G.Lock (1996), Van. Hoang Van (2006)….

The content of the speech "I have a dream" is retrieved from the official and popular website www.americanrhetoric.com .

1.6 Design of the study

There are four main chapters in this minor thesis

- Chapter I: **Introduction** , gives an overview of the rationale, aims, scope, methodology and design of the study

- Chapter II: **Theoretical Background**, illustrates the theoretical background for the main concepts in FG

- Chapter III: **The analysis of the speech "I have a dream"**

- Chapter IV: **Conclusion** summarizes the outcome of the research and suggests some further implications for language teaching and learning.

CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This section provides theoretical orientations for the study. In the first place, (i) Form and Meaning as well as (ii) Model of context in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) will be concerned. After that, there will be an overview of (iii) Clause Combination, (iv) Metafunctions, and (v) Cohesion. In addition, the English language is going to be used as illustration.

2.1 Form and Meaning

Both approaches, through Form and Meaning, try to find out the answer to the question of language features. According to Horrocks (1987), as cited in Thompson (1996), the most fully promoted theory of the Form approach, known as Transformative Generative (TG), is proposed by Noam Chomsky and his followers. These linguists intend to explain the language structure in the way it is. At the same time, the rules for grammatically correct or incorrect usage are set out as the guide for language learners. A sentence or utterance is said to be wrong or right is due to its obedience to the TG laws of grammar. On the other hand, Halliday (1994) views language not as a system of rules but "a system of meanings". He suggests the most practical approach to the grammatical construction should be meaning – centered. This theory is also approved by Thompson, who points out

that "the formative influences of the uses to which language is put" (1996:6) should be considered as important as the structure. In other words, the communicative purposes and choices, or the sentence – utterance meaning plays another indispensable part in linguistics. That is the reason why Systemic Functional Linguistics takes language to its functions through meaning not just formation.

2.2. Model of Context in Systemic Functional Linguistics

SFL characterizes context as the social – cultural situations related directly to the language usage. According to Halliday (1976), the conceptual framework for illustrating the context in which exchanging information is the focus includes three dimensions: (i) the on going social activity, (ii) the role of relationship involved, and (iii) the symbolic or rhetorical channels, which he names as Field, Tenor, and Mode. They can be explained briefly as follows:

(i) Field of Discourse: refers to the subject matter, what is happening, where, when and why it happens …

(ii) Tenor of Discourse: deals with the social relation between participants as well as the influence of this relation on linguistic system and exchange.

(iii) Mode of Discourse: describes the way the language is being used in communication including the medium and rhetorical mode.

In brief, the three dimensions of context model are also the working hypothesis of metafunctions. Halliday figures out that the Fields determine experiential meaning, Tenor represents interpersonal meaning, and Mode corresponds to textual meaning.

2.3 Clause Combination

The relationship between clauses can be interpreted as "one of modification" (Halliday, 1994). As a result, the idea of modification will enable systematic substitute into two dimensions: (i) interdependency and (ii) Logico- semantic relation.

2.3.1 Interdependency

This dimension illustrates the relation of modifying, where one element modifies or is modified by other elements in the clause. Therefore, the relation is dependent or equal due to the modification. If it is unequal with at least one dominant factor, the relationship is named as Hypotaxis. On the other hand, if there is equality among elements, it is known as Parataxis.

2.3.2 Logico – semantic relation

This second dimension of clause combination explains the nexus between clauses in a variety of logico-semantic relation. However, the two most fundamental relationships are (i) Expansion and (ii) Projection.

(i) Expansion: the secondary clause expands the primary one by elaborating, extending or enhancing it.

(ii) Projection: the second clause is projected by the primary clause as a locution or an idea.

2.4 Metafunctions

Halliday (1994: 35) refers to the term *metafunctions* not simply as the characteristics *of* the clause but the throughout meaning *in* the clause. Metafunctions, in his point of view, are divided into three broad functions of language, known as interpersonal, ideational and textual metafunctions.

2.4.1 Interpersonal metafunctions

Interpersonal metafunctions is constructed on the idea that clause can act as an exchange. The communicative exchange purpose may be ordering, apologizing, confirming, inviting, rejecting, evaluating…However, the most basic ones are demanding and giving the language commodity, or information and "goods and services" (Halliday, 1994).

In carrying the exchange of interactive relation, a clause can be seen as consisting of two components: Mood and Residue.

2.4.1.1 Mood

The parts, which are "tossed back and forward" to keep the exchange going, are called Mood, including two elements: (i) Subject and (ii) Finite. On the other hand, the thrown – away parts which are not of great essence to carry the argument are named Residue.

(i) The Subject is a similar term from traditional grammar. It supplies the rest of what it takes to form a proposition, something by reference to which the proposition can be affirmed or denied.

(ii) Finite can be used to make reference to time of speaking (temporal operator) or to the judgment of speaking (modal operator). Sometimes, it is obvious to find out Finite as in the cases when auxiliary or modal verbs are separated.

However, finite can be mixed with lexical verbs in simple present and simple past tense.

2.4.1.2 Residue

The rest of the clause excluding Mood is called Residue. This part consists of three other factors: (i) Predicator, (ii) Complement, and (iii) Adjuncts.

2.4.2 Ideational metafunctions

This division of metafunctions represents the idea that language serves for the expression of content, in other words, the speaker's background knowledge and experience, including his own awareness. The clause plays a central role as representation including the principles, which are made of *processes*. Meanwhile the clause is also a mode of reflection achieved through the grammatical system namely *transitivity* consisting of a set of *process types*.

The process types, in general, express the "goings-on, happening, doing, sensing, meaning, being and becoming" (Halliday, 1994) *which* are going to be analysed further.

2.4.2.1 Processes types, participants and circumstances

The framework of a process involves three main factors:

(i) The process itself: realized typically by verbal groups

(ii) Participants in the process: realized typically by nominal groups

(iii) Circumstances associated with the process: realized typically by adverbial group or prepositional phrase.

The concepts of process, participants and circumstances are semantic categories, which provide the linguistic structure of the events in reality. Each type of process contributes to the construction of English grammar and there are specific kinds of participants associated with it in particular circumstances.

Material process

This type of process carries out the meaning of actions or some entity "does" something, which may have some influences on other entity. The "doer" of the action is called Actor. In many cases, the actions may be referred as affecting to the second participant in the process, this one is known as Goal. The Actor and Goal can be either human or inanimate.

Mental process

This type of process expresses the processes of feeling, liking and seeing. The participant who is the conscious being that is feeling, liking and seeing is named as Senser. The

sensed or felt, liked and seen participant is called the Phenomenon. This is not simply a thing but also a fact. A thing can be felt, liked and seen. A fact, not the fact of some situation, is the one, which can be sensed as in the following examples.

Relational processes

The third type of processes is relational, something is being said to be something else. There are three main kinds of relational processes:

    (i)   Intensive :X is A

    (ii)   Circumstantial: X is at A (refer to location)

    (iii)   Possessive : X has A

Behavioral processes

This type of process shares the characteristics of mental and material process. It illustrates the physiological and psychological behaviors such as cough, smile, dream... The participant who behaves is the Behaver and there are five kinds of this process as Halliday suggests:

1. Processes of consciousness as form of behavior: look, watch, stare...
2. Verbal processes as behavior: chatter, grumble, talk...
3. Physiological processes manifesting states of consciousness: cry, laugh...
4. Other physiological processes: breathe, faint, sleep...
5. Bodily postures and pastimes: sing, dance, lie ...

Verbal processes

This is the process of saying, not simply the action of speaking out some notions but also the symbolic exchange of meaning. Therefore, in *I told you* or *The guide book tells everything*, both "I" and "The guide book" is the participant which is named Sayer.

The verbal process includes not only Sayer but Receiver (the one to whom the process is aimed), Verbiage (content of what is said or name of the saying), and Target (the thing that is targeted by the process) as well.

Existential Processes

This illustrates that something exists or happens. Normally, the word *There* will appear in the process as the Subject without representational function. Existential process typically involves the verb BE and other verbs to express the existence or happening such as *exist, remain, arise, occur...*

2.4.2.2 Circumstantial element

Circumstances may occur in the process with little or no restriction. They express the notion of "When, where, how and why" the process takes place. Circumstantial factors can be adverbial group or prepositional phrases.

2.4.3 Textual metafunctions: theme and rheme identification

The metafunctions which give the clause the characteristics of a message is the Thematic structure. In any clause, there is one element, which "serves as the point of departure" namely Theme and the remainder of the clause, which develops Theme in order to complete the message of the clause, is known as Rheme.

As "the starting – point of the message", theme is commonly supposed to be at the beginning rather than the end of the clause. Theme can be a nominal group, an adverbial group or a prepositional phrase

2.5 Cohesion

2.5.1 The concept of cohesion

Cohesion is expressed not only through grammatical cohesion including reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunction but also through lexical cohesion consisting of repetition, synonym, and collocation. The analysis of the speech "I have a dream" by Martin Luther King is supposed to be related to only some of the cohesion issues, which are going to be dealt with in the following part.

2.5.2 Grammatical cohesion

2.5.2.1 Reference

Reference is about the lexical relationship in and out of the clause and it can be classified into five main sub-types:

Anaphoric reference

Cataphoric reference

Exophoric reference

Personal reference

Comparative reference

2.5.2.2 Conjunction

The logico-semantic relations of clause combination including expansion and projection create a variety of conjunctions. A wide range of meanings is conveyed by a conjunctive

Adjunct (an adverbial group or prepositional phrase) "within the domains of elaboration, extension and enhancement" (Halliday, 1994:324)

Elaboration

Extension

Enhancement

2.5.3 Lexical cohesion

The choice of lexical items can determine the discourse cohesion. Lexical cohesion involves the employment of Repetition, Synonymy, Antonym and Collocation

Repetition

Synonymy

Antonym

Collocation

CHAPTER III
THE STRUCTURE OF THE SPEECH "I HAVE A DREAM"
BY MARTIN LUTHER KING

3.1 Introduction

The procedures and conventions used in the following analysis will be carried out basing on the framework of M.A.K. Halliday and Hasan (1976): *Cohesion in English*; Halliday and Hasan's (1985) *Language, text and context: Aspect of Language in Social – Semiotic Perspective* and Halliday's (1994) *An introduction to Functional Grammar.*

3.2 The author and chosen text

Born on 15th January 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, Martin Luther King was the son of a Baptist minister and a schoolteacher.He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, however, 4 years later he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

The speech "*I have a dream*" was delivered to more than 200,000 people in 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C.

3.3 Contextual configuration of the text

Based on the idea that we can make predictions about the content of context, Halliday and Hasan (1989) develop a model for contextual analysis which includes three main elements: Field, Tenor and Mode (See 2.2). The chosen text will be explored in that way.

1. Field:

   - A spoken text to express thoughts and opinions and then to ask for specific actions.
   - Participants types: actors, sensers, carriers

- Process types: Predominantly material and mental, characterizing the features of rhetorical and descriptive.

2. Tenor:

   - Speakers and listeners

   - Mood: declarative

3. Mode

   - Medium: spoken

   - High lexical density and parataxis and grammatical intricacy

3.4 Clause and Clause complex analysis

Due to time limitation, it would be impossible for the whole text "I have a dream" to be covered completely in this study. Therefore, only the first nine paragraphs with the exception of the seventh part of the text are going to be analysed from SFL perspective, which is believed to illustrate an overview of the whole text.

The chosen text is composed of 56 clauses which comprise 34 clause complexes. There is an inequality between paratactic and hypotactic relation in the text, most of the clauses are of paratactic relation (more than 20 clauses) proving their interdependency. No quoting and quoted clauses are found. The majority of semantic relations are elaboration and sometimes, enhancement and extension. Moreover, the repetition of paratactic clauses, which are brief and simple ones, is of typical characteristics in spoken language making listeners understand the ideas effectively.

3.5 The Analysis of the text in terms of Transitivity, Mood and Theme

3.6 The Transitivity pattern of the text

The analysed parts of the text "I have a dream" are about the historical background of the hatred and racial discrimination from which the Negro people had been suffering, the demand and reasons for a struggle of justice. The "What is going on" of the text is well represented in the experiential component of meaning. From the view of transitivity, of the 56 clauses 38 are of material processes which have been illustrated in Appendix 2. They are used to describe motions of the history and the Negro people not only in active but passive voice as well. 12 of relational processes presenting the state of beings (*will go as* in 2, *came as* in 5 and 7, *is not* in 8, *was* in 18, *is* in 20, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 and 51); 3 of mental processes demonstrating the feeling and sensing of the senser (*am* in 1, *finds* in

12, *must not be* in 41); 2 of existential processes expressing the appearance and existence (*are* in 28, *is* in 37); and only 1 of verbal process showing the spoken language but not in direct form (*must say* in 38).

Most of the processes are in the present tenses (45/56): simple present (34/56) and present perfect (11/56) characterising the current states or actions which occur or have occurred. The circumstantial components in the clauses of the text are mainly Location (in the history of our nation, today, on a lonely island), cause (to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism, to make real the promises of democracy) and manner (alone, ahead, back).

Table 2 demonstrates the transitivity pattern of the text. (See Appendix 2)

3.7 The Mood pattern of the text

The "Who is taking part?" of the text is presented in its mood patterns. The analysis shows that nearly fifty percent of Subjects in the clauses of the text are personal (we -15 times; they: 2 times; I – 2 times). The high frequency of pronoun We which includes both the speaker and the listeners as a united subject is a characteristic of public speech asking for actions and protests.

3.8 The Thematic pattern of the text

The analysis proves that most of the theme in the text belongs to ideational component, or topical theme. Of 56 clauses and clause complexes analysed for theme, 39 have unmarked theme and 4 have marked theme. 22 clause complexes consist of textual theme. Furthermore, there are 19 interpersonal themes, which refers obviously to speaker and listener interaction.

3.9 The Cohesion of the text

3.9.1 Grammatical Cohesion

3.9.2 Lexical Cohesion

CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSION

4.1 Recapitulation

This minor thesis is a study on the structure of the text – speech *"I have a dream"* by Martin Luther King based on systemic functional linguistics. In the first part, the theoretical backgrounds which are the basements for the study are presented. Then, Form and Meaning as well as Model of context in Systemic Functional Linguistics are discussed. An overview of Clause Combination, Metafunctions, and Cohesion including grammatical and lexical cohesion is demonstrated. The text is analysed under three levels: Transitivity system, Mood and Theme. The result of the study tends to support the view that Functional Grammar is the "Grammar of use for application" (Thompson, 1996: 224), thus, the structure of a text and the functions of each component in that structure can be dealt with in a functional system. Due to time limitation and sources of material restriction, the study may have some unavoidable drawbacks. Therefore, any suggestions and comments will be considered seriously.

4.2 Implications of the study

Systemic Functional Grammar applications can be practical not only in language teaching and learning but also in language in use.

Firstly, as for language teaching and learning, the functional grammar perspective enhances the Communicative Teaching movement in the areas of cohesion, modality and theme choice. They are the main factors determining students' language usage in writing for coherence improvement, in speaking for expressing ideas fluently, in listening for

understanding the speakers' choice of confirming new or old information, in reading for realizing the relationships within the passages. Teachers can benefit from the implications of Functional Grammar, too, especially in designing syllabuses. They may base on the functions of language items in the text to direct students instead of only focusing on the formation of the language structures.

The implications of Functional Grammar can be seen obviously in teaching grammar. In addition to explaining the structure of Present Simple Tense, for instance, the teacher may let students focus on the major functions of this tense in English such as describing habits, truth or timetable. By doing so, students will understand not only the formation but also the reasons for using this tense and therefore they will apply it for their own purpose effectively.

Secondly, Functional Grammar is of great usefulness in analysing text structure even in newspaper editorials, academic journals or literary works. Any interpretation of text needs to be based on understanding of the structure and lexico-grammatical devices. As far as linguistics study, especially the approach of Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Grammar is an indispensable tool in evaluating the language used in specific discourses.

4.3 Suggestions for further study

This study has dealt with only a pubic speech using the theory of systemic functional grammar. For further research, it is suggested that other text types such as legal materials or journal articles should be taken into account. Moreover, studies on comparison between English and Vietnamese text structure can be another additional approach.