

A systemic functional analysis of mood system in Olu Obafemi's "Dark Times Are Over?"

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Abstract: Systemic theory was chiefly put forward by the British scholar M.A.K. Halliday in the 20th century. The theory looks at language as property owned by the society to serve some functions identified by the proponents of the construct. Precisely, Halliday holds that language performs three functions, namely, 'the representational function', 'the interactional function' and the 'textual function.' Analogous to these metafunctions, as he calls them, are three network systems: transitivity, mood and theme. The aim of this paper is to examine the mood network system in Obafemi's *Dark Times Are Over?* To achieve this objective, 40 clauses were randomly selected from the play. The study employed systemic theory that largely comes from Michael Halliday and espoused by Eggins for data analysis. The study finds out that declarative moods are more present in the text.

Keywords: Clause, Interpersonal function, Mood system, Play, Systemic functional grammar

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1. Introduction

Mood is one of the trio network systems identified by Halliday. It corresponds to the interpersonal function of language. According to systemic theory, language is functional. One of its functions is the interpersonal function. This interpersonal function is seen when a speaker is addressing a listener or an audience: the speaker takes some roles upon themselves. One of these roles is giving and demanding (Halliday, 1985). A is giving B when the former makes a statement. Alternatively, A could ask B a question; command them or make an offer to them. This interaction, according to Halliday (1985), is the interpersonal function of language. Drama is organised in this pattern - a series of dialogues - characters talking to each other on a range of subjects. The paper will examine how the interactions take place between members of the cast in the play.

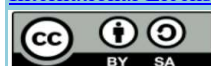
This paper tries to analyse some clauses from Olu Obafemi's *"Dark Times are Over? From the perspective of systemic to show the reflection of the interpersonal function of language at the level of clause. In so doing, the author pays attention to forty clauses which he selected randomly from the text.*

2. Literature review

Systemic Functional Grammar emphasises the idea of function (Isyaku, 2014). In this case, the framework seeks to explain how language is actually used (Halliday, 1985). Systemic theory pays special attention to the way language serves some purposes. The functions are the 'representational', the 'interactional' and the 'textual'. The metafunctions correspond to three system networks - transitivity, mood, and theme. Systemic linguists identified four theoretical postulations about language (Eggins, 2004). These are:

- a) Language serves some functions
- b) Its principal function is to convey meaning
- c) The meaning is affected by the context in which the language is used
- d) The manner of using language is defined by choices

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Bankole (2015) citing Halliday (1994) posits that “the central notion in Systemic Functional Linguistics is structured the way it is because of its functions in the social structure.” According to this theory, human language consists of three levels or strata. The semantic system is the highest of the three levels. Between the semantic system and the phonological realisation is the lexico-grammar. The systemic grammarians describe language from three perspectives, each of which corresponds to a different stratum. Semantics is the highest level that relates to meaning. Second is the stratum of lexico-grammar, where the perspective is from the middle. The last level concerns with morphological and phonological realisation (Isyaku, 2014: 2).

Semantics is the resource for meaning; lexico-grammar is the resource for turning meaning into wordings, and phonology is the resource for turning wordings into soundings. The relationship between the three strata is that of realisation. Semantic system is realised by lexico-grammar. Lexico-grammar is realised by phonology or graphology. Systemic theory gives priority to semantics. According to the theory, meaning is primary in the study of language. The semantic system is organised into three main functional elements or metafunctions. They are: ‘interactional meanings, “textual meanings”, and representational meanings (Halliday, 1985, 1997).

The interactional meaning has to do with the exchanges between the participants in communication. It serves to determine the language user’s role in the communication situation and relationship with other participants. While communicating, the speaker picks a certain role, and while doing that, allots a role to the hearer” (Halliday, 1985). “One of its main grammatical systems is Mood and Modality” (Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997).

2.1. Mood system

Systemic grammarians employ a twin concept - mood and modality to represent the interpersonal element in the clause. They note that modality is expressed through mood and it contemplates mood in the construction of interpersonal meaning. Lyons (1977: 452) points out that modality concerns the opinion and attitude of the speaker and that modalised utterances are non-factual.

The mood system is basically concerned with the situation of the subject in the clause structure: whether the speaker has chosen a subject or not. According to Young (1988), mood is the name given to those grammatical systems that express the speaker’s relation to a proposition, but this kind of meaning does not concern only the speaker and proposition. Speakers take up attitudes towards what they are saying for the sake of communicating with other people: addresses are necessarily involved, and the speaker may input to the addressee some relationship to the proposition.

2.2. Constituents of mood

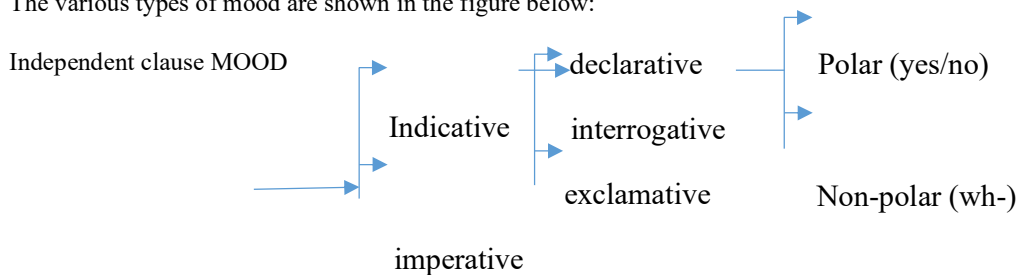
According to Halliday in Eggins (2004), propositions are categorised into two functional elements, vide:

Sani isn’t a good cook
M R

When a clause is used to exchange information, Halliday calls it a proposition. Therefore, Mood is about the grammar of the proposition. Mood is analyzed as a unit containing Subject and Finite elements. Residue, on the other hand, has predicate and an optional complement and/or adjunct as its constituents. “Moods element functions to carry argument; and a Residue, which can be left or ellipsed” (Eggins, 2004). Michael Halliday in Eggins (2004) says that “the mood element as carrying the burden of the clause as an interactive event.” Moods perform the following speech functions:

1. Statement – declarative mood
2. Question – interrogative mood
3. Offer – modulated interrogative mood
4. Command – imperative mood (Eggins, 1994).

The various types of mood are shown in the figure below:



English Mood System

Downing & Locke

Figure 1: Types of English mood

2.3. Synopsis of Olu Obafemi’s “Dark Times Are Over?”

The play was written by Olu Obafemi and published in 2005. *Dark Times Are Over?* is a sad commentary on the political and legal systems of the 21st century Nigerian society. It satirises the decay in the university system and the larger society: prostitution, cultism, religious zealotry and injustice. In the play, an indecently dressed young lady, Beatrice, is raped by cultists led by Yepa 1 and Yepa 2. They are arrested but only Yepa 1 is brought to court for trial because the presiding judge is the aunt of Yepa 2. The lady judge bribes the police to have her nephew released. The interrogation of this act by the playwright leads to a change in the social system.

3. Research methodology

The study used random sampling for data collection. The researcher first identified all independent clauses in Olu’s play. The clauses were classified into different groups – indicative (declarative, interrogative and exclamative) and imperative. Eggins (2004) identifies four mood types and the speech functions they perform. These are: declarative (statement), interrogative (question), imperative (command) and modulated interrogative (offer). Therefore, Eggins’s classification will be used for the analysis. M represents the “Mood”. R stands for “Residue”. S represents “Subject” while F is “Finite”. P is used to represent “Predicator”. C signifies “Complement” and A represents “Adjunct”.

4. Findings and discussions

4.1. Analysis of Declarative Mood System in Olu Obafemi’s “Dark Times Are Over?”

Declarative moods are synonymous with simple sentences. Their speech function is issuing out statements. They have the Mood and Residue as their constituents. The following independent clauses are declarative.

1. They are omnipotent (22).

Table 1: Analysis of Clause 1

They	are	omnipotent
S	F	C
M	R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)
Speech function: statement

2. We are innocent (26).

Table 2: Analysis of Clause 2

We	are	Innocent
S	F	C
M	R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)
Speech function: statement

3. He is a killer (40).

Table 3: Analysis of Clause 3

He	is	a killer
S	F	C
M	R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)
Speech function: statement

4. I am Barrister Williams defending the state (30).

Table 4: Analysis of Clause 4

I	am	Barrister Williams	defending	the state
S	F	C 1	P	C 2
M	R			

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)
Speech function: statement

5. The game is over (32).

Table 5: Analysis of Clause 5

The Game	Is	over
S	F	A
M	R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)
Function performed: statement

6. Thank you Madam (36).

Table 6: Analysis of Clause 6

Thank	You	madam
P	C	S
R	M	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)
 Speech function: statement

7. We are yearning for more action (29).

Table 7: Analysis of Clause 7

We	Are	yearning	for more action
S	F	P	A
M		R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)
 Speech function: statement

8. We trust you (5)

Table 8: Analysis of Clause 8

We	trust	You
S	P	C
M		R

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)
 Speech function: statement

9. I'm fine (p. 6).

Table 9: Analysis of Clause 9

I	'm	Fine
S	F	C
M		R

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)
 Speech function: statement

10. I can't say (10)

Table 10: Analysis of Clause 10

I	can't	Say
S	F: negative	P
M		R

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)
 Speech function: statement

11. They'll kill me (17).

Table 11: Analysis of Clause 11

They	'll	kill	Me
S	F	P	C
M		R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)
 Speech function: statement

12. Those devils have done their worst (17).

Table 12: Analysis of Clause 12

Those devils	Have	done	their worst
S	F	P	C
M		R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)
 Speech function: statement

13. I know your problem (32).

Table 13: Analysis of Clause 13

I	know	your problem
S	P	C
M		R

Type of Mood: indicative (declarative)

Speech function: statement

14. We thank God (15).

Table 14: Analysis of Clause 14

We	thank	God
S	P	C
M	R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Speech function: statement

15. I don't miss anything (18).

Table 15: Analysis of Clause 15

I	don't	miss	Anything
S	F: negative	P	C
M	R		

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Function performed: statement

16. "The commune was so slim tonight" (25).

Table 16: Analysis of Clause 16

The commune	Was	so slim	tonight
S	F	C	A
M	R		

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Function performed: statement

17. Love will overcome (5).

Table 17: Analysis of Clause 17

Love	will	Overcome
S	F	P
M	R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Function performed: statement

18. You both amuse me. (26).

Table 18: Analysis of Clause 18

You both	amuse	Me
S	P	C
M	R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Speech function: statement

19. The truth will make you whole (21).

Table 19: Analysis of Clause 19

The truth	will	make	you	Whole
S	F	P	C	A
M	R			

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Speech function: statement

20. They are so powerful (18).

Table 20: Analysis of Clause 20

They	Are	so powerful
S	F	C
M	R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Speech function: statement

21. I don't want to worsen my misery (18).

Table 21: Analysis of Clause 21

I	don't want to	worsen	my misery
S	F: negative	P	C
M	R		

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Speech function: statement

22. I rise (p. 44).

Table 22: Analysis of Clause 22

I	Rise
S	P
M	R

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Speech function: statement

23. He has the constitution in his favour (43).

Table 23: Analysis of Clause 23

He	has	the constitution	in his favour
S	F: modal	C	A
M	R		

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Function performed: statement

24. You are truly insane (38).

Table 24: Analysis of Clause 24

You	are	truly insane
S	F	C
M	R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Speech function: statement

25. You will not regret this favour (37).

Table 25: Analysis of Clause 25

You	will not	regret	this favour
S	F: negative	P	C
M	R		

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Speech function: statement

26. I have money (p. 35).

Table 26: Analysis of Clause 26

I	have	Money
S	F	C
M	R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Speech function: statement

27. We shall terrorise Odaju land (33).

Table 27: Analysis of Clause 27

We	shall	terrorise	Odaju land
S	F: modal	P	A
M	R		

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Function performed: statement

28. “The baton has changed hands” (32).

Table 28: Analysis of Clause 28

The baton	has	changed	hands
S	F	P	C
M		R	

Type of Mood: indicative (declaration)

Speech function: statement

4.2. Analysis of interrogative mood system in Olu Obafemi’s “Dark Times Are Over?”

Interrogative moods are also found in Olu Obafemi’s *Dark Times Are Over?* Like declarative moods, they contain two major constituents – Mood plus Residue. The former encapsulates Subject and Finite while the later houses Complement and/or Adjunct. Interrogative moods are further categorized into yes/no and WH- interrogatives.

25. Who goes there? (24)

Table 29: Analysis of Clause 29

Who	goes	there?
S/WH-	P	A
M		R

Type of Mood: indicative (interrogation WH-)

Speech function: question

26. Do you understand? (38).

Table 30: Analysis of Clause 30

Do	you	understand?
F	S	P
M		R

Type of Mood: indicative (interrogation Yes/no)

Speech function: question

27. Where are the rest? (31)

Table 31: Analysis of Clause 31

Where	are	the rest?
A/WH-	F	S
R		M

Type of Mood: indicative (interrogation WH-)

Speech function: question

28. Where is my guy? (1)

Table 32: Analysis of Clause 32

Where	is	my guy?
A/WH-	F	S
R		M

Type of Mood: indicative (interrogation WH-)

Speech function: question

29. Who are they? (17)

Table 2: Analysis of Clause 1

Who	Are	they?
S	F	C
M		R

Type of Mood: indicative (interrogation WH-)

Speech function: question

30. How are you today? (6)

Table 34: Analysis of Clause 34

How	Are	You	today?
A 1	F	S	A 2
RE-	MOOD		-SIDUE

Type of Mood: indicative (interrogation WH-)
Speech function: question

31. What did they do to you?

Table 35: Analysis of Clause 35

What	Did	they	do	to you?
C	F: past modal	S	P	A
RE-	M		-SIDUE	

Type of Mood: indicative (interrogation)
Speech function: question

32. Did you behold those teasing nipples? (22)

Table 36: Analysis of Clause 36

Did	You	behold	those teasing nipples?
F	S	P	C
M		R	

Type of Mood: indicative (interrogation Yes/no)
Speech function: question

33. What has he done? (37)

Table 37: Analysis of Clause 37

What	has	he	done?
A	F	S	P
RE-	M		-SIDUE

Type of Mood: indicative (interrogation WH-)
Speech function: question

34. You mean justices do have problems too? (37)

Table 38: Analysis of Clause 38

You mean	justices	Do	have	problems too?
A	S	F	P	C
Adj mood	M	R		

Type of Mood: modulated interrogative
Speech function: question

4.3. Analysis of imperative moods

Imperative moods perform the speech function of commanding. The command can be either direct or indirect (modulated). Technically, they are called optative and jussive.

35. Send him to a rehabilitation centre (p. 41).

Table 39: Analysis of Clause 39

Send		him	to a rehabilitation centre
F	P	C	A
M	R		

Type of Mood: imperative
Speech function: command

40. Sit down young man (29)

Table 40: Analysis of Clause 40

Sit		Down	Young Nan
F	P	A	S
M	R		M

Type of Mood: imperative
Speech function: command

4.4. Discussion

Dark Times Are Over? is a mixture of Standard English and Nigerian Pidgin. The analysis reveals that all mood types are present in the play. Examples:

1. I don't want to worsen my misery (declarative mood)
2. I am no longer in government (declarative mood)
3. where is my guy? (interrogative mood)

However, declarative moods receive more currency than the other mood types. In the clauses analysed, declarative moods have been used twenty-eight times, interrogative moods ten times and imperative moods two times. The predominance of declarative moods in the dramatic text is not unconnected with the fact that most casual discourses are patterned in a way that interactants make statements to share their beliefs, thoughts, ideas and feelings. The setting of the novel is largely a university dormitory. As it were, conversations amongst students are unlikely to be in a form of inquisition and issuing out directives because they are of the same status.

In declarative moods, some clauses have all the required elements as their constituents. That is, Subject and Finite elements for Mood, and Predicator, Adjunct and Complement for Residue. Examples:

- a. We are yearning for more action (Subject, Finite, Predicator and Adjunct)
- b. They'll kill me (Subject, Finite, Predicator, Complement)

Rarely, comment adjuncts like oh, Hei were used by characters in the drama.

In the analysis of interrogative moods, it is observed that many clauses lack a number of elements. In some clause. Some elements are not present in the clause structures. Imperative moods were used also in many occasions as seen in the analysis. Many a times for request, offer and command. The summary of findings is represented in table below:

Table 41: Summary of Findings

CATEGORY OF MOOD	NUMBER OF OCCURENCE	%
Declarative mood	28	70%
Interrogative mood	10	25%
Imperative mood	2	5%
Total number of clauses	40	100%

5. Conclusion

The research has attempted to analyse forty main clauses randomly selected from Olu Obafemi's play by applying systemic grammar developed by M.A.K. Halliday in the 1970s. Mood system has been used for the analysis of selected clauses from *Dark Times Are Over?* Mood types from the text were identified and analysed. The findings of the study reveal that declarative moods are more evident in the text. This is because of the fact that most of the exchanges between and among the dramatic personae were on giving information on different occasions. This makes the text more captivating and comprehensive.

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