The Application of Functional Tenor in Ideology Inculcation

---Analysis of English News Report Register

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Abstract

In this paper, functional tenor is modified into a set of discursive strategies which conceptualize the institution relation established between addressors/writers and addressees/readers through the choices of a systemic-functional kind, where participants in the process in any instance are engaged in a series of negotiations, during which the addressor/writer inclines to orient the addressee/reader toward certain field and, at the same time, certain ideological idea, etc. To put it simply, through constructing certain kind of relationship between addressors/writers and addressees/readers, the addressors/writers can facilitate the ideology to the addressees/readers. The main function of news report is the ideology instilment. Functional tenor plays a central role in the ideology inculcation. This paper testifies how the functional tenor facilitate ideology inculcation by the news report register.

Keywords: Functional tenor, Ideology inculcation, English news report register

1. Introduction

Susan Melrose and Robin Melrose said: "We suggest that the term 'functional tenor' (Gregory 1967) might be a more useful one when we are concerned with grammar in use (i.e. with function), precisely because the term TENOR permits us to conceptualize the institution RELATION established between emitter and receiver through the medium of choices of a systemic-functional kind …". In this paper, functional tenor is modified into a set of discursive strategies which conceptualize the institution relation established between addressors/writers and addressees/readers through the choices of a systemic-functional kind, where participants in the process in any instance are engaged in a series of negotiations, during which the addressor/writer inclines to orient the addressee/reader toward certain field and, at the same time, certain ideological idea, etc. So we can testify how the functional tenor facilitates ideology inculcation by the news report register.

2. The relationship of ideology and functional tenor

2.1 Definition of ideology and its realization genre

Ideology is a system of coding orientation, which makes meaning selectively available depending on the subject's class, gender, ethnicity and generation. All texts manifest, construe, renovate and symbolically realize ideology. Because coding orientations are diversely realized, ideology will never be a question of this or that, but one of more or less. So some texts are more evidently ideological, and some are less. Diverse realization implies in a sense that all texts are multivoiced. There is, in other words, a certain tension in the system, which manifests itself in the semiotic process. For the most part, this dissonance is scarcely heard, for functional tenor plays an important part.

2.2 Definition of functional tenor and its ideology inculcation

Functional Tenor was first specified by Gregory in 1967. He classified Tenor into Functional Tenor an8ersonal Tenor. Functional Tenor refers to the communication purpose. Martin took functional tenor as genre and personal Tenor. In 1982, Martin defined genre (Functional Tenor) as the phasal and purposeful social process in the international systemic functional linguistic conference. Later, Susan Melrose and Robin Melrose (1988) in their article Drama, 'style', stage further developed the use of Functional Tenor by saying "we suggest that the term 'Functional Tenor' (Gregory, 1967) might be a more useful one when we are concerned with grammar in use (i.e. with Function), precisely because the term TENOR permits us to conceptualize the institution RELATION established between emitter and receiver through the

medium of choices of a System-Functional kind, where participants in the process in any instance are engaged in a series of negotiations, and where the traditionally termed addressee is acted upon (by the dramatic text) AND acts upon, in order thereafter to ACT in the context of theater performance." They pointed out clearly that Functional Tenor here, is conceived as a set of discursive strategies mediating, for the reader, between grammar and character/Field-Tenor-Mode, and permitting a 'negotiation' between receiver and emitter—strategies seeking to orient the reader toward, for example, activity-sequences, relationships, attitudes, and the type and extent of shared knowledge that is expected of the reader.

Functional tenor is a set of discursive strategies which conceptualize the institution relation established between addressors/writers and addressees/readers through the choices of a systemic-functional kind, where participants in the process in any instance are engaged in a series of negotiations, during which the addressors/writers inclines to orient the addressees/readers toward certain field and, at same time, certain ideological stances, etc. How this can be done is studied along the three dimensions of tenor: status, contact and affect especially the equal status, involved contact and positive affect. This dissertation is intended to explore how the construction of functional tenor can facilitate the ideology instilment.

2.2.1 Three dimensions of Tenor

Tenor refers to the negotiation of social relationships among participants. Within register, it is the projection of interpersonal meaning. As with interpersonal meaning in general, Tenor is concerned with the semiotics of relationships. It mediates these relationships along three dimensions, which will be referred to here as status, contact and affect. Status refers here to the relative position of interlocutors in a culture's social hierarchy, while contact refers to their degree of institutional involvement with each other. Affect has been included to cover what Halliday refers to as the "degree of emotional charge" in the relationship between participants.

The principles of realization associated with status, contact and affect are identified by Poynton. For status, the key principle is reciprocity of choice: equal status among interlocutors is realized by them taking up the same kind of choices whereas unequal status is realized by them taking up different ones. Contact is concerned with the degree of involvement among interlocutors. This is determined by the nature of the Fields speakers/listeners are participating in --- how much contact they involve, how regularly, whether in work or in leisure activities and so on. Poynton's Field oriented contact distinctions have been modified slightly here; the notion of contact refers to the distance between the speaker and listener. If the distance is short, whether achieved socially or emotionally, the contact between the speaker and listener is more involved than if it is distant. As far as affect is concerned, I think the positive affect is much more likely to be realized in involved than uninvolved contact situations; and also more possible with equal status than with unequal status.

2.2.2 Functional Tenor facilitates the expression of ideology through the microstructure of the clause.

Then next how the lexical choice and grammatical structure related to the Field facilitate the Tenor and the expression of ideology is examined along these three dimensions. It is examined by journalese register especially the Newspaper report. The Microstructure of the clause is the object of study. A clause is the basic unit in which meanings of three different kinds are combined, so three distinct structures, each expressing one kind of semantic organization, are mapped onto one another to produce a single wording. Then the three distinct structures, apart from expressing distinct meanings of three kinds, may have function on one or another meaning expression, such as interpersonal, during the mapping of one another to produce a clause.

The declarative mood is used to facilitate the ideology persuasion. The Subject-selection of the mood is directly related to each speaker's orientation to both that topic and the other speaker. The news report usually uses the strategy of constructing an authorial voice which seems authoritative and honest in its claims to 'representing' rather than 'constructing' reality. In this way, the objectivity and naturalness of the news report register is achieved and the Functional Tenor is established, so the ideology is facilitated. The particular strategy to achieve this is the third person accounts, especially the choosing of the proper names and personal pronouns related to other roles as Subjects.

The Finite contributes to the ideology persuasion by functional-Tenor construction. Here the strategies are mainly the high percentage of past tense and the domination of Subject implicit, objective explicit and low median value modalities.

Both the following two pieces of news report about Iraqi War are in third person accounts, the Subject selections of each are presented as the following: News report 1:

Iraq vows to use all means.

BAGHDAD:(1) Iraqi Warned it would use all means, including suicide attacks, to stop the coalition's advance on Baghdad, as US and British war planes pounded the capital and the southern city of Basra yesterday.

(2) "Martyr operations will continue and they will be carried out not only by Iraqis, but also by thousands of Arab volunteers who have come to Baghdad," Iraqi army spokesman General Hazem Al-Rawi told a press conference

yesterday.

(3) "It is our duty to chase the invaders at any price," Al-Rawi said, claiming more than 4,000 volunteers had flocked to the country from across the Arab world to sacrifice themselves against the US-led military offensive.

(4) US General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, told BBC television earlier the coalition forces could adapt to cope with future suicide bombings, like the one that killed four US troops on Saturday, as the war entered its 11th day.

(5) On Saturday, a suicide attacker—reported an Iraqi army officer—detonated a commandeered taxi after driving up to a US checkpoint near the Shi'ite Muslim holy city of Najaf, some 150 kilometers south of Baghdad. (Quoted in China Daily, March 31, 2003)

News report 2:

(1) Bombing kills 8 in residential block
    Subj: Me   mi (2) Eight people   were killed (3) and 44 wounded in a recent bombardment of a
                            Subj: Me   E: p   Subj:Me   E:p

resident block south of Baghdad, (4) the director general of Iraqi civil defence said yesterday
                            Subj: Me   mi.

(5) The raids targeted a quarter housing employees of roads and bridges department at Yussufiyah,
    Subj: Me   mi

(6) General Hatem Ali al-khalaf told reporters taken to the site.
    Subj: Me   mi (7) He   said   (8) the raid took place early Wednesday morning.
                              Subj: Me   mi   Subj: Me   mi

(9) US President George W Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair had   a joint press conference
                        Subj: A   E: a

(10) US-led forces closed in on Baghdad yesterday,
  Subj: Me   mi   (11) Iraq's state television yesterday showed president Saddam Hussein chairing a meeting
Subj: Me   mi

(12) The meeting was attended by Saddam's son Qussay who helds the elite
    Subj: Me   E: p

(13) it said. (14)The coalition opened a new front in northern Iraq when upto 1000 elite troops
      Subj: Me mi   Subj: A   E: a

(15) In addition, some 12,000 troops from the US Army's fourth infantry Division left their Texas
    Subj: A   E: a

Base yesterday for the Gulf where ships carrying their tanks and armoured vehicles were diverted last week. (Quoted in China Daily, March 28, 2003)

News report 3:

US. Solder killed four wounded near Tikrit

BAGHDAD- (1) A U.S. soldier was killed and (2) four companions wounded yesterday
                Subj: Me   E: p   Subj: Me   E: p

in an attack near Saddam Hussein's home town of Tikrit,.(3)a military statement said.
                                     Sunj: Me   mi

(4) It was at least the seventh U.S. soldier killed in attacks in Iraq during the past two weeks
   Subj: Me mi (5) as unrest   plagues the country.
                      Subj: A   E: a(6) As tension increased about the role of religious leaders in postwar Iraq,
                        Subj: Me   mi

(7) U.S. forces yesterday raided a Baghdad office of the SCIRI, an armed Muslim shi'ite group with ties to Iraq.
    Subj: A   E:a

(8) In Tikrit gunmen opened fire on American troops using small arms and a rocket-propelled grenade.

      Subj: Me   E: a

(9) The injured troops were evacuated by helicopter and ambulance to medical facilities

    Subj: Me   E: p (10) the statement said. (11) The names of the soldiers and their unit

                  Subj: Me   E: p   Subj: Me

were withheld to allow notification of relatives.

E: p   (12) It was the latest in a series of fatal attacks on U.S. forces in Sanni Muslim areas in central Iraq

        Subj: me mi   (13) which the military blames on Ba'sthist remants of Saddam's ousted government.
Subj: A   E: a   (Quoted in Washington Times, June 8, 2003)

Notes: Subj=Subject mi=middle A=agent E: a=effective active E:p=effective passive Me=Medium

In the first piece of news report, ten (4,5,6,8,9,10,11,12,14,16) of the sixteen Subjects are related to an authorial voice. Nine of the ten Subjects except Subject eleven are involved in the use of the proper names and personal pronouns related to other roles. And in the second piece of news report, seven (3,4,7,9,10,12,13) of the thirteen Subjects are embodied in the authorial voice. All of them are related to the use of proper names and personal pronouns related to other roles. We can see indeed the news report tends to use the third person account, especially the proper names and the personal pronouns to gain an authorial voice. Of all the sixteen pieces of news report in China Daily and Washington Times examined, the distribution of the Subject rates are mostly the same as that in the above two reports. Of the ten Subjects related to an authorial voice in the first news report, six (4,5,6,10,11,12) are concerned with the Iraqi authority, while of the seven Subjects related to an authorial voice in the second news report, five (3,7,9,10,13) are about the Americans. The first are for the Iraq side by using Iraq as an authority, while the second are in line with the Americans by using America as an authority.

In the first piece of news report, fifteen of the sixteen clauses are in past tense, and in the second piece, eleven of the thirteen clauses are in past tense. All the clauses left in the two pieces of news report are in present tense. Then of the sixteen other pieces of news report in China Daily and Washington Times, the prevalence of past tense, the presence of few present tenses and the sporadic appearance of the future tense are also characteristics of the news reports. Hence the main use of past tense in narration is a technique to give what is reported a sense of naturalness. Future tense is rarely used for its character of prediction. It embodies the journalist's personal idea explicitly. In this way, the primary tense contributes to Functional Tenor construction and ideology expression. All the texts examined are in declarative mood. This gives minimal directions to the reader. The Functional Tenor is constructed to facilitate the ideology persuasion.

In the above two pieces of news report, modalities do not appear. This shows that the news reports seldom make judgment explicitly. If it makes some judgment, the Subjective implicit, objective explicit and low or median value modalities are used. Let's look at two other pieces of news report from the sixteen examined news report:

News report 4:

(1) US Fires first shots in Iraqi WarBAGHDAD: (2) US president George W. Bush unleashed a war to topple Saddam Hussein yesterday with dawn air strikes on Baghdad, (3)but the Iraqi leader responded defiantly, denouncing the "criminal Bush" (4)and fired missile at Kuwait. (5) Announcing the start of a campaign to oust Saddam and disarm Iraq, Bush said (6) "selected targets" were hit. (7) But US officials said (8) an all-out air and ground offensive might be days a way. (9)"These are the opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign." (10) Bush said in a televised address about two hours after the expiry of a US ultimatum to Iraq. (11) He said (12) the US military would seek a swift victory, (13) while trying to avoid civilian casualties. (14) But he warned (15) the conflict could be "longer and more difficult than some predict."(16) Three hours after the raids began, Saddam appeared on State television in military uniform, a black beret and thick-rinamed glasses, urging Iraqis to defend their country.(17)"The criminal little Bush has committed a crime against humanity." He said, reading from notes. (18) Several hours after the US raids on Baghdad, a Kuwaiti defence ministry spokesman said (19) an Iraqi scud and two smaller missiles struck northern Kuwait. (20)No casualties were reported. (Quoted in China Daily, March 21, 2003)

News report 5: (1) Iraqi militias hold up advance on BaghdadWASHINGTON: (2) U.S. and British forces will deal with pro-Saddam militaries attacking them in southern Iraq before taking on Baghdad. (3) The News York Times reported yesterday. (4)The strategy change that is likely to delay the allied battle for Baghdad, apparently begin on Tuesday (5) when U.S. armored forces clashed with Iraqi foot soldiers east of An Najaf, about 200 kilometers south of Baghdad. (6)The new approach will protect the long supply lines on which the U.S. military relies on to support its advance on Baghdad. (7)One military official was quoted as saying by the Times in Camp Doha, Kuwait. (8)US military sources said (9) they intend to cut off routes to southern Iraqi cities and towns to take the fight to the Iraqis. (10)However, the sources said (11)street-to-street fighting will be avoided, with U.S. forces focusing their attacks on command centers,

weapon caches used by Iraqi irregular forces such as the Fedayeen Saddam. (Quoted on Washington Times, March 27th, 2003)

In News report 4, three of the twenty clauses use modalities. They are clause 8, 11 and 15. The used modal verbs are "might, would and could". The three represents Subjective implicit and low value modality. And in News report 5, three of the eleven clauses use modality. They are clause 2, 6 and 11. The used modal verbs are "will, will and will". The three are in Subjective implicit median value modality. In this way, the two pieces of news report express their attitude toward the Iraqi War. The former by predicting the war must be enlarged, long and difficult embodies a disapproval of the war, while the latter, by judging what the US and British forces must do to fight against Iraq, shows its endorsement of the war. By taking the director general of Iraqi civil defence as an authoritative voice, the journalists are in line with the Iraq people. Then by giving reasons for the killing of the Iraqis, the journalist expresses his ideology. That is, the American are the actors of the killing. The killing is caused by the US-led forces closing in on Baghdad in the Iraqi War. So he expresses his disapproval of the war especially of what the Americans did.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, functional tenor is a set of discursive strategies which conceptualize the institutional relations established between addressors/writers and addressees/readers through the choices of a systemic-functional kind, where participants in the process in any instance are engaged in a series of negotiations, during which the addressors/writers tends to orient the addressees/readers toward certain field and, at the same time certain ideology, etc. It plays a central role in the ideology instillment. It is concerned with subject selection and the finite contribution. The proper names and the personal pronoun especially those related to other roles (he, she it, they) are chosen as subjects, which give the accounts a sense of authority and honestness. The finite also contributes to functional tenor construction and ideology instillment by the different rate of primary tense and the domination of subjective implicit, objective explicit and low and median value modalities. In this way, not only the language rules and static structures of the news report can be taught and learned, but also the news report texts of certain motives can be constructed by mapping knowledge in particular contexts. It can help teachers and students to read and write news reports.

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