An Evaluation of Aspects of Culture and Grammatical Metaphors in Selected Tunde Kelani’s Films

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Abstract. This paper analyses aspects of culture and grammatical metaphor in Tunde Kelani’s films. Both primary and secondary sources of data are employed for the analysis of this study. The primary source includes five purposively selected films of Tunde Kelani. The study is restricted to only five of Kelani’s films because of their richness in grammatical metaphor. Books, journals, articles and the internet form the secondary source of data. Data were analysed within the provision of Halliday’s theoretical notion of grammatical metaphor introduced in 1985 within his Systemic Functional Grammar. The results show that Tunde Kelani employs interrogative construction for statement to clear the interrogator’s doubt, to achieve diplomacy, to suggest lack of direction, to dodge subsequent question, etc. Second, the analysis of grammatical metaphor in the films reveals that Kelani utilizes statement in the directive mood for politeness purpose. Third, the study shows that statement could be used to express the directive mood. This reflects indecision from the part of the speaker. It also reflects the power relation between the interlocutors involved. In conclusion, the complexity of the information in Nigeria’s films is as a result of the different forms of grammatical metaphors used. In a nutshell, grammatical metaphor creates tension, suspense and dramatic irony in Tunde Kelani’s films, thereby making them interesting enough. Therefore, the aspects of grammatical metaphor of Nigeria’s films should be studied to get the whole thematic concerns therein. In this paper it is suggested that further studies be carried out with some attentions on stylistic analyses in order to have a holistic understanding of Tunde Kelani’s films.

Keywords: Culture, metafunctions, grammatical metaphor, results, films

1. Introduction

Context-dependent aspects of language are subsumed under pragmatics. This understanding, according to Levison (1983) has little connection with linguistic structure. This assertion might be responsible for Kempson’s (1977:68) claim that the study of Pragmatics aims at giving an explanation with regards to how speakers of any language may use the sentences of that language to convey messages which do not necessarily have any relationship with the linguistic content of the sentences actually used.

The pragmatic study according to Dairo and Onadeko (2008:80) involves “speech acts, conversational structure, conversational management, discourse organization and sociolinguistic aspects such as choice of address form.” It also encompasses grammatical metaphors, which according to Norgaard et al. (2010:96-7), “refer to grammatical constructions which are employed to perform grammatically non-typical task”. A fact that is obvious from the definitions of Pragmatics and Grammatical metaphors given by Kempson (1977) and Norgaard et al. (2010) respectively is that the grammatical metaphor interpretation of any text is pragmatic.

The propagation of a functional notion of language is credited to Halliday (1985). Kress (1976:19-24) as cited in Opara (2005) opines that even though there are copious social purposes for which users of any language use them, they are chopped down to a sizeable number of functional aspects (that is, metafunctions). The metafunctions include: the ideational functions, the interpersonal functions and the textual functions. The ideational function of language presents language as a tool for representing
and shaping experience. The interpersonal function focuses on how language is used to establish relation between interlocutors. The textual one concerns itself with textual organization of language, that is, data organization.

In order to further explain the meanings involved in the first two metafunctions, Halliday then introduces the concept of grammatical metaphor. We therefore have two types of grammatical metaphors: interpersonal and ideational grammatical metaphors. Interpersonal type concerns the areas of modality and mood.

Grammatical metaphors of mood are found more usually in spoken discourse. However, the second type (that is, metaphors of modality) are commonly found in written language. According to Halliday (1985) as cited in Aritonang (2014) a written text seems to be lexically saturated with little grammatical intricacy, but a spoken language possesses a high grammatical intricacy with sparse lexical items. Since 1985 when the theoretical notion was developed by Halliday, many papers have been written on grammatical metaphor. A large number of these works which have appeared in journals and chapters of books have concentrated on written text. For instance, Suhadi (2015) examines the aspects of interpersonal metaphor in some verses of the Holy Quran. The present study focuses on the spoken mode, specifically on the Nigerian home videos by analysing Halliday's interpersonal metaphor as an influential factor enhancing the messages of home videos in Nigeria.

As for the Nigerian film industry, Etuka (2019) claims that the industry is the second-largest in the world considering the number of films produced in the country. The Nigeria’s home videos have equally served as the agents of socialization as they help us in the study of the society. What this means is that either it is capable of influencing the behaviour, lifestyle, culture, as well as language attitude of individuals. This is apart from its huge contribution to the GDP of Nigerian economy. Dabbling into the grammatical metaphor in Tunde Kelani’s films is worthwhile. The insight gained from the work will enhance the reader's linguistic position.

As stated earlier, the theoretical notion of grammatical metaphor is divided into: ideational and interpersonal metaphors. Here, the selected home videos used are subjected to only the latter for thorough analysis. For the purpose of this study, four of Tunde Kelani’s films were watched and analyzed.


Our exemplification of Tunde Kelani’s grammatical metaphor comes from “Saworoide”, “Arugba”, “The Narrow Path” and “Maami”, four of his works considered most mature. The films’ subtitles are used directly but “corrected” where necessary as our data. We equally number the utterances for easy identification. The aim of the study is to investigate aspects of interpersonal metaphor in Tunde Kelani’s films in order to enhance the reader's linguistic position.

2. Theoretical Framework

This work operates strictly within the provision of Hallidayan theoretical notion of grammatical metaphor introduced in 1985 within his Systemic Functional Grammar. Grammatical metaphor, according to Norgaard et al. (2010: 96), “refers to grammatical constructions which are employed to perform grammatically non-typical task.” Saenz (2000) views grammatical metaphor as a semantic choice made from a variation in the grammatical construction. Romero and Soria (2015) refer to the notion of grammatical metaphor as non-typical grammatical variation of typical grammatical forms. From these scholars’ definitions, we see grammatical metaphor to be congruent constructions used for incongruent purposes. This is achieved when a grammatical form is used to perform a “strange” task. Halliday (1985) distinguishes between the two main types of grammatical metaphors: ideational metaphors (or metaphors of intransitivity) and interpersonal metaphors. Here, only the latter type of grammatical metaphor is of interest to us, even though efforts are made to explain the former briefly. In an attempt to explain what it is, Halliday further makes a sharp distinction between the two areas, modality and mood, concerned in the interpersonal grammatical metaphors.

With regard to mood, three basic kinds of interactive functions exist: statement, question, and command
(Miriam, 2004). “The prototypical mood choice”, according to Norgaard et al. (2010:96) “for a statement in English is that of a declarative clause, commands are typically imperative and questions interrogative.” This is what Suhadi (2015:231) calls “the congruent coding.” The point, here, is that transference of mood from congruent coding into incongruent coding is possible in interpersonal grammatical metaphor. This is when grammatical construction performs grammatically non-usual function. Example is when interactants can make choices among the moods. One can choose to answer a question by means of an interrogation.

A: Who is the executive governor of Osun state?
B: Isn’t it Gboyega Oyetola?

The semantic implication of the above response by Mr. B suggests uncertainty. Also, what is meant to be an imperative construction for the window to be closed, according to Norgaard et al. (2010), may be encoded as a statement (“Gosh, it’s cold in here”). The semantic implication of this suggests a marker of politeness and it reflects the “power relation between the interlocutors involved.”

Apart from the above, Halliday (1994:358) summarizes the three values of modality as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Usuality</th>
<th>Obligation</th>
<th>Inclination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Certain</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>Probable</td>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>Supposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Allowed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The orientation of modality performs the function of determining how explicitly the speakers want to absorb themselves into the propositions or statements. Orientation of modality is classified into four kinds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>Implicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit</td>
<td>Explicit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Halliday, ibid)

To sum up, in order to modalize his messages, the speaker should take all these three aspects of modality into consideration. Halliday (1994:75) sees modality as “the speaker’s judgment of the probability, or the obligations involved in what he is saying.”

3. Review of Related Literature

Aritonang (2014) examines impacts of interpersonal metaphor in the text of presidential debate between Barrack Obama and Mitt Romney. Two types of interpersonal grammatical metaphor are found in the text. According to the scholar, the presence of interpersonal metaphor adds the colour of spoken language such as immediate feedback, everyday lexis, non-standard grammar and hesitations to the debate.

Modality is an alternative way of expressing modal meaning (Behrooz, 2015). Miriam (2004) opines that modality is the way evaluation is expressed about the possibility of happenings. According to Suhadi (2015:229) “modality covers modalization and modulation.” The former concerns probability (‘maybe’) and usuality (‘sometimes’) while the latter obligation (‘want to’) and inclination (‘want to’). Both modulation and modalization could be expressed through modal auxiliary verbs and modal adverbs. With this understanding, modality here, suggests the judgment of the speaker concerning the clause.

Halliday (1994) categorizes modality into three aspects of type, orientation and value. Types of modality cover modalization and modulation (see above). The values of modality are meant to analyse the degree and scales of modality. They are of three (high, median and low). Halliday further allocates values to each of the modal verbs as in:

- **High**: must, ought to, need to
- **Median**: will, would, shall, should
- **Low**: may, might, can, could.

Hadidi (2012) investigates a comparative study of ideational grammatical metaphor in business and political texts. Part of the aims of the study is to discover the kind of ideational metaphors that are used and what their semantic functions are in business and political texts. Hadidi’s (2012) analysis confirms the hypothesis that ideational metaphors dominate political and business texts. In the same manner Aritonang (2014) observes that interpersonal metaphor gives room for immediate feedback in a political debate. Hadidi (2012) opines that ideational grammatical metaphor is used by politicians to convince voters and people at large to believe them. The scholar also notes that ideational grammatical metaphor is a persuasive tool for business men to achieve certain desirable effects. Suhadi (2015) studies the aspects of interpersonal metaphor of mood
in some verses of the Holy Quran. The results of the study affirm that some verses of the Holy book contain grammatical constructions that are used to perform grammatically non-typical tasks. That is, some of the verses employ incongruent coding in sending messages. Huyen (2013) examines interpersonal metaphor in English and Vietnamese stories. The aim of the study is to find out the ways in which interpersonal mode works in English and Vietnamese. That is the similarities and differences between interpersonal metaphors in both languages. It is discovered that there are various areas of differences in terms of semantics due to lexical features peculiar to the two languages. Also, the structures of interpersonal metaphor in English and Vietnamese stories are significantly different. It is found out that the two types of interpersonal metaphors of mood and modality exist in the two languages.

In an effort to better understand L2 writers’ use of grammatical metaphor, Alfredo (2016) carries out an investigation on grammatical metaphor in the writing of apprentice scholars using English as an additional language. The aim of the study is achieved through the analysis of the writes-up of some four Japanese.Ngongo (2016) carries out a systemic analysis of grammatical metaphor in texts of Waijewa language. The aim of the study is to describe grammatical metaphor in texts of the language. The study relies on observation and interview as its sources of data. The result of the analysis shows that interpersonal metaphors are more than ideational ones in the text of Waijewa language.

In the same vein, Dong (2013) investigates interpersonal metaphor in legal discourse. Four discourses of cross examinations were analysed. The analysis reveals that there is a significant difference between the lawyers’ modality and witnesses’. The reason is that lawyers consciously and carefully select their words and questions. On the other hand, witnesses speak without certainty.

4. Analysis

In this section, the analysis is carried out based on the theoretical issues already discussed:

4.1 Statement expressed in the interrogative mood

Normally, the congruent form of a statement is realized through a declarative. To illustrate, the speech function of a statement might be realized as declarative,e.g, The spoon is in the kitchen. Alternatively, the transference of mood from congruent coding into incongruent coding is possible in interpersonal grammatical metaphor of mood. Here are instances of statements realized with interrogative moods:

**Interaction 1**

**Film: Arugba**

**Background:** King, Ifa priest and other chiefs are deliberating on who is to be the Calabash’s bearer for the next Osun festival.

Ifa priest: Your highness, from our investigation, Adetutu is fit to perform the task this year again.

King: Let’s forget about the investigation and simply look out for a new offering bearer.

Otun: But why your majesty? Arubga has expressed her willingness to perform the task the only thing left is to consult Ifa oracle about the ceremony.

King: Let’s choose another bearer from the royal house and forget Adetutu who’s been long in the University environment.

Ifa priest: Hmmm, this is Ifa’s message o. We should not distort it.

King: Ifa didn’t say this o. It is the girl who expressed her willingness.

Chief Ayegoro: Can’t ‘Mobandele be the bearer?

Ifa priest: Aigoro, is it Omobandele that we asked to look at the Ifa tray that refused in the palace that day?

Hedging remains one of the potent tools at the disposal of the interlocutors to avoid giving direct answer to a question. The question asked in (h) is not necessarily performing a question role. At least, the function of hedging, beside several others, is to help the listener to clear his/her doubt. The metaphorical expression utilized by the “Ifa priest” in (h) above may be to clear his doubt as to whether “chief Aigoro” refers to the already known “Omobandele” or another. There are up to four options open to a listener for dodging a question. He may choose not to answer, turn the tables, answer another question or lie. Turning the table means exchanging roles. Here, the listener takes control of the situation with higher authority. One of the ways the person being interrogated can turn the table is by asking a question in return.

The utterance (h) above is a question in form but the purpose is a statement. Implicit in the question is “Omobandele cannot be the bearer”. It is used to achieve diplomacy and to avoid being clearly antagonistic. Answering a question by means of a question is to let the interrogator realize that he can find the answer by reasoning. This, in return reflects the power relations between the interlocutors involved. Context, we know, plays a crucial role in
language use. True pragmatic meaning is often given to the interlocutors’ utterances by context. The environment of the speech event is one of the contexts. The physical setting of Arugba is Oshogbo, a Yoruba land and its plot is expected to evolve from the Yoruba culture. The customs and beliefs of the Yorubas require the title holders to be respected. They take appellation before their real names or titles. Only the people in the older age group are exempted. The vocative or term of address (“Aigoro”) without any appellation used by the Ifa priest to introduce his question suggests that he is older than chief Aigoro.

Apart from the above, sarcasm is also achieved when answering a question by means of question. Though no single word of this utterance states it, the incongruent expression crystalizes the incompetence and sexual promiscuity of Omobandele. The moral and social value attached to the virginity reflects the general cultural values among the Yoruba. The Yoruba must have set a premium on virginity for them to think that a deflowered girl’s vision is blurred spiritually and this prevents her from doing certain things. For example, she cannot be the Calabash bearer for the Osun festival or look at the “Ifa tray”. The Ifa tray is a flat piece of wood used for divination. It can also be compared to the modern day close circuit camara through which the perpetrators of crimes are detected. From the film, we are aware that Omobandele refuses to look at the Ifa tray in order to know who is responsible for the stealing of her mother’s bracelet. This is because she is not a virgin as expected of girls of her age.

4.2 Statement expressed in the directive mood

Normally, the congruent form of a statement is realized through a declarative. Here are instances of statements realized with directive moods:

Interaction 3
Film: Arugba
Background: Dr Atanda comes to introduce the set of medical practitioners posted to the town from Orile by the WHO to the King in his palace.

King: Is the lady one of the delegates? (He points to the only female doctor among them)
Dr Atanda: Yes Kabiyesi, they are all specialists in the HIV/AIDS pandemics. The gentleman sitting next to me is Dr Adigun and the lady sitting adjacent to him is Dr Itiola.
King: (beckons on Dr Itiola) Come closer to me, come and greet me.
Dr Itiola: (stands to greet him)
King: Come closer still. Come and greet me properly. How are you? So, this beautiful girl is a medical doctor?
Dr Itiola: Yes my king.
King: Wonderful! Dr Atanda, is she single? Can she be living with us in the palace?
Dr Atanda: (laughs) Your highness, let’s move on.

Apart from turning the tables by means of questioning, interlocutors employ command for dodging interrogation. It is metaphorical to use imperative construction instead of the prototypical words “yes” or “no” used to agree or disagree with somebody. A typical example is in the directive used by “Dr Atanda” to parry the king’s questions in utterance (h) above. Using this means has some pragmatic implications. First, it is an indicator of politeness and further crystalizes the cultural background of the interlocutors. It is believed by the

Another typical example of answering a question by means of question is found in “the king’s” response to Yejide’s question in (d) above. It also suggests lack of suitable responses when an interrogative construction is employed to answer a question. Here, the metaphorical utterance as utilized by “the king” signals indifference to Alasa’s assassination. This act of indifference further reveals the theme of criminality in the film. This is not a surprise to the audience as it is evident from the previous scenes that “the king” is the architect of Alasa’s death. He employs this metaphor for at least two reasons. First, to dodge any subsequent questions from Yejide and second, to assure Yejide that the police are already conducting investigations to unravel the mystery behind the death of Alasa. Though the utterance is a question in its form, the purpose is a statement. The congruent form of the question is: “The police are meant to conduct investigation and not the king.”
Yoruba people that a king is the direct deputy of the almighty God. Some even see kings as deities that must not be questioned or disagreed with. “Can she be living with us in the palace?” is a euphemistic way of saying “can she marry me?” Therefore, saying “No, she can’t” may incur the wrath of the king. Also, the fundamental right of “Dr Itiola” would have been trampled upon had “Dr Atanda” said “Yes, she can”. In this case, the metaphorical expression used trivializes the issue.

Second, it is a sign that the question asked by the “king” is irrelevant to the subject of discussion or their mission in the town. In essence, discussion about marriage at that point is inimical to the interests of the WHO and society at large, especially at the time when HIV/AIDS should be seen as the sole enemy of humanity in Africa.

3.3 Command expressed in the declarative mood

Normally, the congruent form of a command is realized with an imperative. Here are instances of commands realized with declarative moods:

Interaction 4
Film: Narrow Path
Background: “Odejimi” who has been having a secret love for “Awero” calls her from the company of her friends to tell her his mind.

Odejimi: Awero! (smiling) Believe me, Awero. That very day I saw you dancing at the festival, I felt something and I said to myself, this is my future wife dancing.

Awero: (surprised) Wife?
Odejimi: Yes, wife Awero! You see, I fell in love with you that very day, but I didn’t want to tell you. I had to be sure first. So, I asked people about you and they spoke well of you. You come from a good home, you are gentle and I will want you to be my wife.

Awero: You want me to be your wife just like that?
Odejimi: No! Not just like that. I also come from a good family. A family of honour. We are the children of Ogundele Amerinwolu. I know what is to be done and I will do everything. My family will do everything that needed to be done if your reply is good.

Awero: (surprised) Wife?
Odejimi: You are only smiling. Talk to me! Ok, what’s your reply to all I’ve told you?

Awero: Hemmm, let me think about it.

Odejimi: Does that mean yes?

Awero: I said let me think, haaa! I thought they said you hunters are very patient people?

Odejimi: We are, we are patient and I will be patient with you, Awero. So, when do I see you again?

Awero: I don’t know. My friends are waiting for me. (she looks at the direction where her friends are standing and makes a sign of leaving)

Parts of the pragmatic tools are conversational maxims. Tunde Kelani blends conversational maxims with grammatical metaphors. Here in utterance (l), one of Grice’s maxims has been broken. This is the maxim of manner which refrains interlocutors from being obscure and ambiguous in their utterances. She communicates non-literal meanings via her utterance “…My friends are waiting for me”. What is meant to be an imperative construction for Odejimi to quickly say what he has got to say is encoded as a statement (“My friends are waiting for me”). It suggests congruent form “try to be quick” even though no single word from the utterance explicitly states such command. The utterance (l) is in the form of a statement but its essence seems to be a command. The reason for using this metaphoric utterance can at best be inferred. Awero chooses this incongruent utterance in order not to be openly hostile towards Odejimi. It must have been inconsiderate of the former if she had used the congruent form. We see that she is no more patient with all entreaties coming from Odejimi. She initially reveals her tiredness for his unending entreaties through her linguistic choice in (j) “I said let me think about it, haaa! The metaphorical expression seems to be polite when compared with its congruent form (“try to be quick”). This in turn enhances the theme of love prominent in the film.

Interaction 5
Film: Maami
Background: Kashi who just returns to the country (Nigeria) after several years he has been playing football for one of the English football clubs (Arsenal). Coming back to the country reminds him of the death of his mother and he is disturbed. Despite of his state of mind, the Nigeria Football Federation wants to win him via his personal assistant (Dolapo) to play for Nigeria.

Dolapo: Kashi, look here. Have you decided whether you are going to play for the Super Eagles and report to camp tomorrow? The Secretary General is issuing a press statement in the morning and we don’t want him to say negative things about this time.

Kashi: Look, I’m still thinking of what’s the best for my country.

Dolapo: But Kashi the nation wants to know where you stand.
Kashi: I’ve not made up my mind yet.
Dolapo: So, why on earth did you fly thousands of mile back to Nigeria if you had no intention of playing? I mean what’s the big idea about that?
Kashi: Good because there might just be other important reasons why I’m in this country that has nothing to do with 140 million football fans, ok.
Dolapo: Ok!
Kashi: I will send for you when I need you. (he turns back and Dolapo departs)

In spite of hatred that permeates the whole film, Kashi is able to conceal his feelings through some metaphorical utterances used. The utterance above is also a statement in its structure but the essence is a command. It has the congruent form of “don’t talk about this again” and it could have been harsh if used. The incongruent expression makes it easier to deduce the employer-employee relationship between Kashi and Dolapo. Prospective employers often use this type of metaphor and others such as “we will get back to you” especially when they don’t want the candidate to feel sad that he/she is not picked. In the real sense, the tone is magisterial than polite. The utterance above is also a polite way of dismissing her from his presence. The tone is more formal than when he says “don’t talk about this again”. The incongruent expression suggests love and politeness. Its use at least reduces the immediate disappointment that should have come with the congruent form.

Interaction 6
Film: Saworoide

Background: After the king’s thugs have killed Adedigba, chief Bada comes to inform her father, Ayangalu that these thugs are also coming for him too.
Ayangalu: (there is a serious knock at the door) Who is that? Haa, Bada.
Chief Bada: Baba, what happened and why are you crying?
Ayangalu: They have killed my daughter, Adedigba. That’s her son over there (points at a small boy).
Chief Bada: Haa! Please, baba. Some people are coming to arrest you and take Saworoide to the palace. If you dare refuse, they will kill you. I’m off oooo (he dashes off).

The grammatical utterances in (d) above are statements but the essence is a command. Even though Ayangalu is not directly told to leave the town it becomes imperative for him to do so. The four utterances are intended to persuade Ayangalu to leave the town. The departure has to be urgent as death may be involved. No single line of the utterance has told him to leave but it is suggested. The utterances are statements but imperatives.

5. Discussion of Findings

The analysis of aspects of grammatical metaphor of Tunde Kelani’s films reveals that the film maker employs different metaphors to enhance the storylines and carry home his different messages. First, the analysis of “Arugba”, one of Kelani’s films shows that he employs declarative construction in interrogative mood to “garnish” his thematic concerns. Such grammatical metaphor is used in the film for some purposes. It is used to clear the speaker’s doubt, to achieve diplomacy and sarcasm, to dodge possible subsequent questions and to turn the table.

Second, the analysis of grammatical metaphor in the films reveals that sometimes statements could be expressed in the directive moods. Interlocutor may employ command to achieve statement. The analysis shows that when this is done the play writer achieves some semantic purposes. It is an indicator of politeness and unpreparedness. It suggests that the question asked is irrelevant and not worth of answering. With these findings, the present study is in line with the position of Aritonang (2014) when he opines that when grammatical metaphor is used it results in the complexity of the information. In Aritonang (2014:7) the same metaphorical expression was utilized by Barrack Obama “to avoid direct question and keep the close distance to the audience.”

Third, the analysis shows that a statement could be used to express the directive mood. The utterance in the form of a statement which its essence is a command, according to the analysis is used for politeness. Generally, it is a marker of respect as it reveals the age differences between the interlocutors. This is what Norgaard etal. (2010:96-7) says “is a marker of politeness and which reflects the power relation between the interlocutors involved”. In a nut shell, grammatical metaphor creates tension, suspense and dramatic irony in Tunde Kelani’s films, thereby making them interesting enough.

References


