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Attitudinal Epithets in a Children Science Book: A Functional Grammar Analysis

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Abstract

The paper titled Attitudinal Epithets in a Children Science Book: a Functional Grammar Analysis analyzes Attitudinal Epithets occurrences in a children's book that intends to explain some scientific phenomena on 'bugs'. Since Attitudinal Epithets are used by speakers or writers in making personal or subjective comments over a phenomenon, they do not normally occur in writings with scientific genre. This paper reveals one of the children's science books used as supplementary resources for Science and English lessons in one of the Private Primary Schools in Bandung city, Indonesia. The analysis is conducted by means of descriptive qualitative methods. The findings provide analytical description over the Attitudinal Epithet's lexical variants that occur in the data; the intensification of Attitudinal Epithets; the scientific, cultural, or other facts in the text preceding or following the Attitudinal Epithets, or outside the text (contextually) to which the speaker directs his personal comment; and the semantic interpretation (including the polarity – negative or positive) towards the Attitudinal Epithets.

Keywords: functional grammar, children science book, attitudinal epithet

1. Literature Review

1.1 Functional Grammar

This paper describes attitudinal epithets in scientific genre, which are analyzed through Functional Grammar (FG) approaches developed by M.A.K Halliday. Halliday's approach to grammar is a semantically driven, which, while not denying that certain principles of syntax do apply, seeks to consider and identify the role of various linguistic items in any text in terms of their function in building meaning (Halliday, 1989, p. xi; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 3). Clauses, phrases, and groups may be viewed in the light of three different metafunctions, the Ideational, Textual, or Interpersonal Metafunction. The Textual metafunction interprets meaning based on whether a linguistic unit is the point of departure, the take-off ground of what the speaker is going to say, or not. While the Interpersonal metafunction tends to seek a language function in enacting a social relationship, whether to inform, offer, request, decline, accept, and the like. The ideational metafunction interprets meaning experientially, from the viewpoint of people's experience of their world. This view of a language brings this paper to the analysis of one of the Experiential Functions of the pre-modifiers in Nominal Groups, the Attitudinal Epithet.

Interpreting meaning of an epithet through anaphoric reference was analyzed by Beller (in http://www.researchgate.net/publication/43648019). By anaphora, paraphrasing attitudinal epithets appropriately depends on the semantic elements or facts in the preceding text(s). In addition to anaphoric reference, this paper, *Attitudinal Epithets in Children Science Book*, provides other references (the following text or cataphora, and the context surrounding the attitudinal epithets) to interpret the speaker's comments through his choice of attitudinal epithets.

Another linguist investigating attitudinal epithets is J. L. Lemke (http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/). He investigated Attitudinal Epithets as a Head. He classifies the evaluation of Attitudinal Epithets into those indicating the speaker's desirability, warrantability, normativity, usualness, importance, comprehensibility, and humor. This paper provides different classifications. It classifies the Attitudinal Epithets into their lexical variants, intensification strategies, polarity (positive or negative), and aspects to comment on.