

Theme and Rheme in Children Songs

Asst. Lect. Hajer Akram Jasim
Al- Noor University College
Hajerakram944@gmail.com

1.Mohammed Mahfood Shukr
2.Mohammed Loqman Mohammed
3.Marwa Nashat Issa

Abstract

Theme and Rheme A clause has a character of message, giving it the status of communicative event. That communicative character comes from one part of the clause which is known as THEME; Theme and rheme help us understand how information is conveyed in clauses.

The study will carry out the research in the field of discourse analysis . This study aims to elaborate the benefit of children songs in teaching English language, it also aims to analyze and extract theme and rheme from the chosen data.

Keywords: Children songs, Theme, Rheme

1.1 Introduction

Theme is the first element occurring in a clause; the remainder clause is Rheme, (Brown, G and Yule G, 1983).The Theme-Rheme Theory can also be observed in children's songs, which often use simple and repetitive structures to convey meaning and create a new information . In children's songs, the theme is often introduced at the beginning of the song, while the rheme is presented in subsequent lines (Halliday, MAK, 1994).

Children's songs are a popular and essential aspect of early childhood education and entertainment. These songs serve a variety of purposes, including teaching children fundamental skills, developing their language and social skills, and fostering their creativity and imagination. One of the key elements that make children's songs memorable and effective is the use of rhyme and repetition, which helps children learn and remember new concepts and ideas (Brown, G and Yule G, 1983).

This research is divided into three chapters. The first one is an introductory chapter that gives a general idea about the rheme and theme theory as well as the aim of the research. While the second chapter represents the theoretical chapter that highlights the definitions of the main concepts. As for chapter three which represents the practical chapter of the research.

1.2 . Aims of the Study

The study will carry out the research in the field of discourse analysis . This study aims to elaborate the benefit of children songs in teaching English language, it also aims to analyze and extract theme and rheme from the chosen data.

Chapter two

2.1 Definitions

In linguistics, the concepts of theme and rheme refer to the structure of sentences and the way information is presented within them. These concepts are also relevant in the context of children's songs, which often have simple and repetitive structures that make use of themes and rhemes in different ways (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014)

The theme of a sentence is the part that establishes the topic or focus of the sentence. It typically comes at the beginning of the sentence and provides context for the rest of the sentence (Routledge. Eggins, S. (2004).

In children's songs, the theme often corresponds to the main idea or message of the song, and it is often repeated throughout the song to reinforce its importance .

The rheme, on the other hand, is the part of the sentence that provides new or additional information about the theme. It typically comes after the theme and helps to clarify or expand upon it (Ibid).

In children's songs, the rheme often corresponds to the details or actions associated with the main idea or message of the song.

For example, in the children's song "Old MacDonald Had a Farm," the theme is established in the first line ("Old MacDonald had a farm") and is repeated throughout the song. The rheme, on the other hand, changes with each verse and provides new information about the animals and sounds on the farm.

Overall, the use of themes and rhemes in children's songs helps to create a structure that is easy to follow and understand, and it allows for the repetition of key ideas and information. This can be especially helpful for young children who are still developing their language skills and may benefit from the repetition and reinforcement provided by these structures (Ibid).

2.2 Theme and Rheme

The concepts of theme and rheme play a crucial role in the structure of children's songs, helping to create a simple and effective framework that is easy for young listeners to understand and follow. The

theme of a children's song establishes the main idea or message of the song and is often repeated throughout to reinforce its importance. The rheme, on the other hand, provides additional details or actions related to the theme, helping to expand upon it and provide a fuller picture of the message being conveyed (Lin, Y., & Liu, Y. (2018). 9(3), 637-644. Tuan, L. T., Nguyen, T. H., & Tran, T. T. (2018)).

Together, the theme and rheme create a cohesive structure that helps children understand the song and reinforces key concepts and ideas. The repetition of the theme, in particular, is an important element of children's songs as it helps young listeners to learn and remember important information. In addition, the use of simple language and catchy melodies helps to engage children and make the songs fun and memorable. Overall, the use of themes and rhemes in children's songs helps to create a simple and effective structure that is easy for young listeners to understand and follow. By reinforcing important ideas, children's songs can aid in language development and learning, while also providing an enjoyable and engaging experience for children (Mackinlay, E.(2018,6).

2.3 The benefits of theme and rheme in teaching

Structure of utterances according to communicative criteria which can be tested by comparing question-answer pairs: Who sang the song? Caroline (sang the song). The information formulated in the question (sang the song) is the theme of the answer and is usually omitted in the answer; the information sought in the question is the rheme of the answer (Caroline). Previous mention is only one of many ways of thematizing linguistic material. The theme can also be understood from the context without previous mention. There are also utterances, especially at the beginning of a discourse, which contain only rhematic material. In contrast, an utterance without a rheme is uninformative and violates maxims of conversation (Butt, D, Fahey, R, Feez, S, Spinks, S and Yallop,C, 2001).

Effective children's songs combine these two elements seamlessly to create an enjoyable and educational experience for young listeners. The melody or rheme helps to capture children's attention and engage them in the song, while the theme provides a meaningful message or lesson that children can take away from the experience. When these elements are combined effectively, children's songs can be a powerful tool for teaching and inspiring young children, helping them develop important skills and values that will serve them throughout their lives (Ibid).

Chapter Three

3.1. Data

The data of this research are the song's lyrics. The data source of this research are obtained from the song lyrics "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star". We will deal with the first three stanzas of the song.

3.2. Analysis

Let's start with analyzing the first stanza of the song :

First stanza :

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!

The theme of this stanza is "Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you are!" since it introduces the main idea of what this song talks about. Then , the rest of the stanza represents the rheme of the song because it explains a lot of details about the theme . The rheme of this stanza deals with the beauty of shining stars in the sky , then the theme is repeated again at the end of the stanza.

Second stanza:

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!

The rheme in the second stanza describes more details about how those stars start appearing at the night , then, there is a repetition for the theme of the song again at the end of this stanza : "Twinkle, twinkle, little star,How I wonder what you are!"

Third stanza :

Then the traveller in the dark,
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He could not see which way to go,
If you did not twinkle so.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!

The rheme of this stanza beautifully describe how the stars are great guide for travellers to let them know when they should go , and if they did not twinkle travellers will lose their way. Then again we have a repetition to the theme of the song which describe how the child looks up at the sky and wonders what are those shining things.

3.3. Conclusion

In the process of analysis it's found that the theme of the song is The theme of a sentence is the part that establishes the topic or focus of the sentence. It typically comes at the beginning of the stanza and provides context for the rest of the sentence. In children's songs, the theme often corresponds to the main idea or message of the song, and it is often repeated throughout the song to reinforce its importance. The rheme, on the other hand, is the part of the sentence that provides new or additional information about the theme. It typically comes after the theme and helps to clarify or expand upon it. The theme is established in the first line ("Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you are) establishes the theme, which is the appearance of the star and repeated at the end of each stanza of the song. Otherwisw, the rst of each stanza introduces the rheme, which is the speaker's curiosity about the star's identity.

References

- Brown, G. and Yule, G. (1983). Discourse Analysis. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). An Introduction to Functional Grammar (2nd ed.). Edward Arnold, London.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). Routledge. Eggins, S. (2004).
- Lin, Y., & Liu, Y. (2018). 9(3), 637-644. Tuan, L. T., Nguyen, T. H., & Tran, T. T. (2018). (Mackinlay, E.(2018,6).

Website

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042814004095>