Captivating stories from India and bringing them to life in English through thematic analysis

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Abstract

Thematic structure is one of the discourse function forms, playing a crucial role in conveying language information, influencing the understanding of the original text. One of the discourse function forms, thematic organization is essential for communicating linguistic information and affecting how the original text is understood. Readers of all ages and cultures have been enthralled with the short tale, which is a very important and popular literary form. It is a strong tool for documenting a variety of human experiences in a short amount of time, in addition to providing wholesome amusement in the current rush of life. A short tale is generally understood to be a narrative that can be finished in one sitting, making it an approachable and captivating literary genre. Short tales have grown in popularity and size due in large part to the expansion of magazines and literary journals, which give both new and seasoned authors a stage on which to display their work. The short tale has frequently been underappreciated by critics, despite its broad popularity and literary value. It hasn't gotten as much scholarly attention as the book or poetry, especially when it comes to its technical and thematic aspects. Even though a lot of short stories deal with deep subjects, classification is still mostly ignored. The majority of anthologies include well selected collections of short tales by different authors, but they seldom ever offer a clear justification for their choice or thematic arrangement. Based on the similarities and variations between the theme structures of English texts, this article compares and contrasts the thematic structures of Indian narrative novels with their English translations. According to research, translators should make every effort to maintain the original text's thematic structure while translating. However, because English texts differ from one another, translators may need to make some changes to the original text's thematic structure while maintaining the translation's readability and meaning equivalency. Indian English short fiction's depth of theme investigations and its function as a mirror reflecting existential, cultural, and societal truths are both highlighted.

Keywords: Literary translation, narratives, thematic structure, and translation.

1. Overview:

Translation is the exchange of cultures as well as the transfer of one language to another. The content of the original text is properly reproduced in excellent translations, which also rebuild the original style and convey cultural overtones. Novels are translated sentence by sentence; nonetheless, the translation is not a superposition of sentences. It is important to think about whether the translation's chosen themes accurately convey the original author's meaning and if the material flows naturally when sentences are joined at the beginning and finish. Therefore, while translating with the same conceptual meaning, selecting alternative information development structures will have a direct impact on the translation's faithfulness, fluency, and coherence.

An intriguing remark is made by Naga-Mandala at the start of Girish Karnad's play. Two oral stories that Karnad heard from A. K. Ramanujan served as the basis for the play. (Naga-Mandala 20 Note) It opens with a scene of a thespian sitting in a destroyed temple, sentenced to die unless he stays up all night. He is shocked to find several lamp flames entering the temple; they are bare flames without a wick, a lamp, or anybody holding them. As they converse, the dramatist recognizes that they are all stories, each of which bears testimony to domestic happenings.

One flame describes how the narrative exacted revenge on the former mistress of the home who knew a song and a story but never performed it or revealed it. The song and the narrative burst out the mistress's mouth as she slept with her mouth open. The music became a sari, and the narrative became a lady. A young woman wearing a vibrant sari emerged from her husband's room as the elderly woman awoke. There was a major argument between the husband and wife since he had nothing to explain. "So if you try to gag one story, another happens," remarks another flame who is listening to this occurrence (25).

Other people who are anxious to hear the Story's story later welcome her to join them. However, she responds, "But why are you listening to a story? It cannot be passed on (25). The playwright then emerges from hiding and declares that he will not only hear their stories but also share them. Karnad has therefore addressed both the necessity of passing on stories as well as their pervasiveness in this drama. Epics, ballads, myths, legends, fairy tales, fables, parables, anecdotes, character studies, and so on all contain stories for this reason. The short narrative is a relatively modern literary form, nonetheless, despite its ancient roots.

It is little more than 150 years old. The short narrative is written by one person and intended for a large audience, which sets it apart from the older tales, which were primarily oral.

First, theme analysis is applied to English translation discourse using Halliday's idea of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis can be used to find and classify recurring themes, ideas, or concepts in translated texts. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), more especially Halliday's Theme-Rheme theory, is frequently used to analyze the structure and presentation of information.

By comparing the theme structures of source and target texts, researchers may identify how thematic patterns change throughout translation and what variables influence these changes. This allows them to provide helpful recommendations for translation practice. Thematic structures that have undergone modifications throughout the translation process are categorized by comparing and evaluating the alterations. Lastly, the causes behind the alterations are examined in thematic framework throughout the translation process, exposing potential influences and offering helpful recommendations for literary translation.

2. Thematic Structure

2.1 Theme and Rheme

The ideas of theme and rheme were initially put out by Mathesius, the founder of the Prague School, in his work Functional Sentence Perspective. According to him, the theme—which expresses known information—is the part at the start of a phrase that introduces a topic in communication, whereas the rheme—which expresses unknown or new information—is the other part. These two ideas aid in the study of the functions of various sentence constituents in language communication.

Though Halliday maintains that the conceptual meaning of theme is more expansive than the topical meaning, the theme should encompass both the topic and other elements at the beginning of the sentence that do not represent the topic. The Prague school of thought holds that the theme is the subject of a sentence or the object of its narrative. Based on this perspective, the System-Functional school, represented by Halliday, explains the discourse meaning of English using its terminology—theme and rheme. Halliday (2000) defined and separated themes from a functional standpoint, offering a thorough explanation and in-depth investigation of the thematic structure.

According to him, the theme serves as both the beginning point of the material and the intended message of the sentence. He believes that, in contrast to the subject in conventional grammar, the theme is the beginning of the entire sentence and the main topic of the phrase, which serves as the beginning of communication.

The rheme, which is a description and explanation of the theme, is the final section that comes after the theme. Halliday separates themes into textual, interpersonal, and ideational themes from the standpoint of the three metafunctions of language. He also makes a distinction between single, multiple, and clause themes.

A single theme lacks internal structure and is thus unsuitable for further analysis, but a multiple theme has internal structure and may be further subdivided into textual, interpersonal, and subject themes. Every phrase must have at least one ideational topic, which is typically found at the end of numerous themes. Additionally, the complete phrase serves as the theme position when the clause is used as the theme. The related rheme is employed to better illustrate the theme, which is the focal point of a phrase. Generally speaking, the rheme comes last and the topic comes first in a linear phrase structure.

The rheme is mostly fresh information, but the topic is frequently well-known information in terms of information dissemination (Baker, 2000:122).

The section at the start of the sentence that serves as the beginning point of discourse information is referred to as the topic in this article's thematic structure analysis.

2.2. Thematic analysis :

• **Main Idea:** Finding and examining a phrase or text's "Theme" and "Rheme" is the main goal of thematic analysis, especially in the context of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). A clause's "Theme" is where it begins and contains information that is already known, but the "Rheme" adds fresh details concerning that topic.

• **Goal:** Scholars can comprehend how material is arranged and presented in both the source and translated texts by examining topic frameworks. This makes it easier to spot semantic trends and changes in emphasis brought about by the translation process.

• **Data:** The translated texts themselves serve as the theme analysis's data, and the term "discourse" in English translation discourse refers to these texts.

2.3.Process of Translation:

1. Contrastive Analysis: Scholars contrast the English translation's and the original text's thematic structures.

2. Finding Themes: Researchers find recurrent themes, patterns, and ideas that are essential to the translated discourse by using a methodical coding approach.
3. Examining Changes: The analysis shows how the target text's thematic structure differs from that of the source material. To change the thematic focus, the translator can, for instance, include new subjects or switch to the passive voice.
4. Explaining Reasons: Next, researchers examine the causes of these theme shifts, taking into account elements including the translator's goal, the target language's limitations, and the discourse's particular environment.

5. Making Suggestions: The results of the topic analysis can help professional and literary translators make improvements to the efficacy and lucidity of their translations. Typically, the thematic structures consist of "topic + explanation." The thematic structure of English is often "theme + rheme," and the language is hypotactic, emphasizing the subject.

2.4. Declarative Sentence:

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2.4.1. Interrogative Sentence:

There are two types of interrogative sentences: general questions and particular queries. With the subject verb or linking verb acting as the theme, general inquiries in English are frequently created by rearranging the declarative sentence's subject verb sequence. The special interrogative term WHelement is used to highlight knowledge gaps in special queries. While a particular inquiry is often asked in declarative sentence order, a general question's theme is typically taken by the sentence's subject.

2.4.2. Imperative Sentences:

Imperative sentences indicate command and requests, etc. English imperative sentences are divided into affirmative imperative sentences and negative imperative sentences. In affirmative imperative sentences, the theme of subject-less imperative sentences is the verb before the sentence, the theme of imperative sentences with a subject is the grammatical subject, the theme of imperative sentences with "let's" is "let us or let's", and the theme of imperative sentences with "do" is usually the zero theme and "do" together to form a bipartite theme. In negative imperative sentences, the theme of imperative sentences with "don't" is composed of "don't + grammatical theme" or "don't + zero theme".

- Read after me.
- You stop talking!
- Let's/ let us go to school.
- Do your best.
- Don' t follow me.
- Don' t you shout out me!
- The construction of imperative sentences in

2.4.3. Exclamations:

The composition of English exclamatory sentences is the same as that of special interrogative sentences, consisting of "what + noun. /how + adj./adv." or adding an exclamation mark at the end of a declarative sentence.

- What a fool that the man is!
- How beautiful you are!
- The book is so interesting!

2.4.5. Textual Function of Themes:

In terms of consistency in text content, the connection of the text is carried out in the order of known to unknown, and most of the thematic parts in English languages are consistent with the previous text. For example,

The short story is arguably the most widely read literary form nowadays. The increase in magazines has contributed to the short story's appeal. The editors have been writing articles in

their publications to increase sales. We recall how Dickens' works were serialized in 19th-century English journals, and readers anxiously anticipated the following issue to continue reading his work. The same was done in India by The Illustrated Weekly of India, several English-language journals, and numerous Indian-language periodicals. For those who remember, R. K. Narayan's novels and short tales were published in The Illustrated Weekly.

Likewise, Ruskin Bond's and several other authors' short stories were. Short stories gradually took the role of serialized novels in these journals. The straightforward explanation was that a short tale could be published in a single issue, unlike a novel. According to the most widely accepted definition, a short narrative is one that can be read in one sitting. Therefore, it was well received by magazine readers. As a result, a great number of people read the short narrative. Additionally, this resulted in the rise of several short story authors. Some authors, like as Ruskin Bond, were able to make a living solely on their short stories.

In his autobiography, Lone Fox dancing Bond writes, "In order to survive, I had to produce as many stories, essays and middles as possible, so I kept banging away at my sturdy old typewriter". In his memoirs, he states that he received fifty rupees for a short tale that was published in The Illustrated Weekly of India, as well as thirty or twenty-five rupees from other English-language Indian periodicals. His works were his only source of revenue because he didn't take a job. That also applied to R. K. Narayan.

Each phrase in English discourse has its own separate theme, and the theme frequently serves as the focal point of the whole event. Similar to this, information is transmitted from the old to the new, but the theme's contribution to the discourse's evolution is restricted and its information value is lower.

3. Contrastive analysis:

Three factors are used to statistically assess the shifts in each discourse's thematic components throughout the translation process in the investigation of the theme structure of chosen book passages:

(1) the total number of sentences in the source text;

(2) the number of sentences that maintain the original sentence's positional and major structures; and

(3) the number of sentences where the theme structure has changed. The alterations in the subject structure of the two book chapters that were chosen were categorized and thoroughly examined using statistical methods.

3.1. Theme Structure in First-Person Narratives

The selected content of this article is the second chapter of the novel *To Live* and its English translation. The statistical changes in the thematic structure of its translation are as follows:

The number of sentences in original text	194
The number of sentences with unchanged thematic structure	82
The number of sentences with changed	112

By contrasting and analyzing the thematic structures of the original and translated texts narrated from a first-person perspective, it is found that the majority of sentences in the chapters have changed their thematic structures, which can be classified into eight categories:

Add time adverbials or other conjunctions	43
Prepose adjective phrases/adverb phrases/prepositions	29
Conversion by "There be"	2
Change of organizational order	8
Dependency conversion	6
Translation by "It"	10
Overall translation --- partial translation	4
postposing initiator, highlight the main content	10

(1) The translator may purposefully use time adverbs or other transitional terms while translating the source material into English in order to improve the coherence of the translation's narrative order.

(2) In the original text, the translation advances the adverbial phrases, prepositions, and adjective phrases in the clause to the beginning of the sentence. because significant aspects in the English language are frequently positioned at the start of sentences, while other supporting elements are positioned at the conclusion of sentences.

(3) Whereas the original text's place-expressing clauses frequently overlook geographical details, the English sentence structure must be modified using the "there be" sentence pattern, which results in a thematic shift in the target language phrase. (4) Modifying the thematic framework in certain ways might improve the translation's readability while maintaining the impact of the source material. (5) Most sentences are subordinate and use conjunctions after the C-E translation. (6) In the original text, the "it" form is typically used as the subject or other pronouns when numerous sentences have a same theme or are unowned.

(7) The original language frequently positions the action's originator at the front of the phrase, making them the sentence's topic. The action content is frequently placed at the beginning of the phrase after English translation to emphasize the content to be stated, while the genuine initiator, which explains the cause, purpose, and accompanying state, is placed at the end of the sentence.

3.2 Theme Structure in Third Person Dialogue Novels:

The selected content of this article is the sixth chapter of the novel *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* and its English translation. The changes in its thematic structure are summarized as follows.

The number of sentences in original text	23
The number of sentences with unchanged thematic structure	13
The number of sentences with changed thematic structure	10

Through Contrastive Analysis, it was found that there are changes in the thematic structure of the clauses in the dialogue content, which can be classified as follows:

(1) A modal verb or auxiliary verb replaces the personal pronoun as the theme of the general interrogative phrase in the original text when it is translated into English. (2) The agent or speaker is positioned in front of the sentence, and the initiator of the action is

frequently at the beginning of the phrase in the original language. But in English, the action is emphasized by starting the phrase at the beginning.

(3) In the original text, time is occasionally indicated by sentences rather than by explicit time conjunctions or adverbs. Time adverbial clauses and other phrases as the theme in connection with the context must be used freely when translating into English.

(4) It is typically positioned near the start of the phrase in the original language to emphasize the topic's main idea. In English, on the other hand, both sides are aware of the topic of conversation. Imperative phrases and subject omission can be used to eliminate repetition, draw attention to fresh information, and create a strong connection between the context. However, the translator has changed certain phrases' thematic frameworks to make the translation more fluid and logical. Furthermore, the theme's structural states—such as "preposing action," "preposing adverbial clause," and "it/here as theme"—change in both chapters.

4. Conclusion:

More than half of the sentences in narrative novels undergo theme frameworks throughout the translation process, according to a research on thematic analysis. A thorough examination of Indian culture, spirituality, and sociopolitical dynamics is provided by the rich topic content. His work stands out for its in-depth study of Indian intellectual traditions, especially Advaita Vedanta, which he skillfully incorporates into his stories. To put it briefly, to ensure that the translated version and the original material are equivalent in both form and content. Two book genres with various narrative vantage points are examined in this article. Their thematic structures alter significantly as a result of their various story formats, and they fall into the following categories:

(1) Add temporal adverbial clauses to strengthen the translation's logic.

(2) Advance the adjective, adverb, prepositional, etc. phrases to the start of the translated sentence as the theme.

(3) Use phrase patterns like "there be" or "it" to modify the text's structure and guarantee the translation's completion.

(4) Words in English phrases are entirely rearranged or altered in their organizational structure.

(5) The agent is placed after the action in the translation to provide an explanation of the action's goal, cause, and accompanying state, among other things.

(6) The subject changes in the English translation due to the shift in the phrasing of the subordinate structure.

(7) Other kinds of thematic structural modifications, such interrogative thematic modifications. Two primary elements influence the shifts in the thematic structure of narrative novel translations, according to Contrastive Analysis of Texts.

(8) Because the two languages have different ways of expressing themselves, different themes are chosen, different narrative arcs begin, and different meanings and information centers need to be communicated.

(9) It is important to strike a balance between accurately communicating the original information and maintaining the article's coherence and cohesiveness. Consequently, the translation strategy chosen by the translator.

Indian mythology and folklore, when paired with creative storytelling skills, provide a unique perspective on how tradition and modernity interact in post-colonial India. Author Raja Rao has significantly enhanced Indian English literature with his unique narrative voice and thematic depth, adding a viewpoint that unites Indian and Western literary traditions and continues to strike a chord with both readers and academics.

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