

THE FUNCTIONS OF NATIONAL ANTHEMS, A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHADIAN AND CAMEROONIAN NATIONAL ANTHEMS

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about the analysis of the Cameroonian and Chadian national Anthems from a systemic functional perspective, notably on the basis of the theory of textual meaning: Theme. This theory is coined by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004). The two national anthems are referred to as Text 1 and Text 2, respectively. The analysis of linguistic data is carried out using both the quantitative and qualitative research method principles; thus, the article adopts the mixed research method. Actually, the texts have been split into analyzable units called clauses and the aforementioned research methods have been applied to them so as to find out the functions officiated by the national anthems of Cameroon and Chad. The results disclose an abundant occurrence of topical Themes followed by interpersonal ones both in Text 1 and 2. These have highlighted fundamental functions of patriotism, unity and work in a general context of right and wise attitudes to enhance peace and harmony. The values encoded in the national anthems of Cameroon and Chad must be actualized if these countries are to develop.

Key Words: Textual meaning, national anthems, functions, Cameroon, Chad.

1. INTRODUCTION

All African countries, except Ethiopia, were colonized by capitalist European powers (France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Great Britain, etc.) from the 1880s up to the 1975s (National Geographic, 2022). Like all African countries, Chad and Cameroon were colonized, and they both got their independence in the 1960s. The newly independent countries composed national anthems to form new bonds and loyalties different from those in favor of colonial empires. Actually, the African governments and ruling elites found it necessary to create common national identities, hopes and visions on the same lines as those of the western countries or the former colonizers. Thus, they were profoundly aware of the tricky task of building nations with extraordinary cultural and religious diversities. The composition of national lyric songs was aimed at achieving peace and harmony, among other things, in the newly independent countries.

It is obvious that the above objectives have never been achieved owing to ethnic and religious considerations but also to the gap of efficient leadership. One of the major dilemmas confronting humanity and notably African countries is the growing significance of ethnic and religious conflicts (Bangura, 1994). These are real challenges to cohesion and tolerance which are the real bases of any sustainable development. The statistics (3 to 8 million attendant battle deaths per year) provided by Esteban, Mayoral & Ray (2012) confirm this sad reality. Chad and Cameroon cannot be an exception; they do face such situations. The deadly inter-community clashes between the Musgoum and Shuwa Arab ethnic groups in the town of Logon Birni, far North of Cameroon

on 10-13 August 2021 is a perfect illustration of how ethnic interests override national ones (France24, 2021)

This paper argues that fundamental texts (constitutions, laws, ordinances and decrees) and especially national anthems can be used intelligently to foster patriotism and unity around common visions and hopes. The analysis of the Chadian and Cameroonian national anthems is carried out on the basis of the systemic functional linguistic theory (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) to find out what are the main functions of these anthems through the thematic choices made in their compositions.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The Grammar of Textual Meaning: Theme

A text can be analyzed as a representation of human experiences, as an exchange and as a message. This corresponds to the three meanings ascribed to language through the text: the experiential meaning, the interpersonal meaning, and the textual meaning (Eggins, 1994). Describing the grammatical patterns of Theme or textual meaning is about understanding the organization of the communicative events. Indeed, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), in all languages a clause has a substance of a message; it has some configuration or structure regarding what is to be prioritized or not. In English the clause is written or uttered as message by having a distinct rank ascribed to one part of it. The part that is put in the first position is called Theme, which combines with the remainder or Rheme to form a message. Thus, a clause has two parts: Theme and Rheme. Theme is defined by Eggins (1994) as the constituent which serves as the starting point of the message or what the clause is going to focus on whereas the Rheme is the part of the clause in which the Theme is clarified. There are three kinds of Themes (Eggins, 1994):

- ✓ A Topical Theme is the component of the clause which has a Transitivity value such as actor, behavior, sensor, carrier, circumstantial elements (place, time, etc.);
- ✓ An Interpersonal Theme is the element of the message to which a Mood function can be ascribed: finite (in interrogative mood) and adjuncts (vocative, mood, comment, polarity);
- ✓ A Textual Theme is an element of the clause which has a cohesive role such as Continuity Adjuncts and Conjunctive Adjuncts.

Markedness and Unmarkedness are also important concepts that must be taken into account in the analysis of a discourse. An unmarked Theme is defined by Eggins (1994) as a “typical” or “usual” Theme while a marked Theme means simply “atypical” or “unusual”.

- ✓ An unmarked Theme is a Theme which conflates with the Mood constituents such as Subject, Finite, Predicator, WH elements.
- ✓ A marked Theme is a Theme which conflates with any other constituents from the Mood system, the usual type of marked Theme being circumstantial elements.

3. METHODS

To be relevant an analysis of text or discourse must follow a clear method. According to Gee (1999), the researcher must highlight the patterns and links within and across the text so as to build premises about how meaning is being actualized and organized. The grammatical terminology

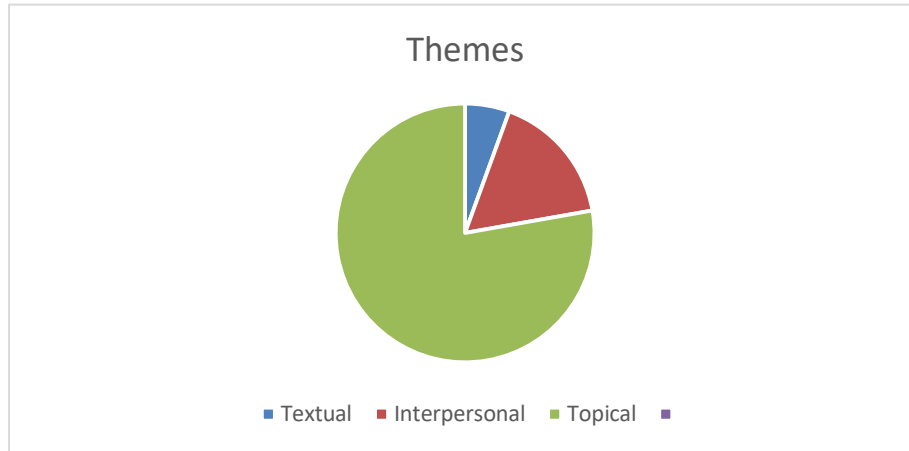
used for the analysis is less important than the patterns that are found and the hypotheses that are formed and tested. Within the framework of this analysis, the Themes are identified in units that are referred to as clauses or “**any verb and the elements that “cluster”** with it” (Gee, 1999: 99). Text 2 has been translated into English and split into clauses whereas Text1 have been simply split into clauses, for its English version already exists. The clauses have been meticulously counted in the two texts to get quantitative data. Moreover, the various Themes are identified and represented quantitatively through figures, tables and graphs, whereas the analysis is basically carried out on the qualitative basis. Thus, the research method adopted in this work is the mixed research method (Gunasekare, 2015) which is defined as a research design with philosophical theorizations as well as methods of inquiry. Actually, it involves philosophical postulates that orient the gathering and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single work. Its main assumption is that the combined use of quantitative and qualitative perspectives provides a better comprehension of research hypothesis than the use of one approach alone (Creswell, 2014).

4.RESULTS

Table 1 recapitulates the occurrence of the different Themes whereas Graph 1 provides an exact representation of the Themes in Text 1 (Cameroonian National Anthems).

N°	Clauses	Themes Types		
		Textual	Interpersonal	Topical
01	<u>O CAMEROON, THOU</u> <u>CRADLE OF OUR FATHERS,</u> <u>Holy Shrine where in our midst</u>	-	+	+
02	<u>[thy soil</u>	-	-	+
03	<u>[On thy hills and valleys</u>	-	-	+
04	<u>[DEAR FATHERLAND, thy</u> <u>worth</u>	-	+	+
05	<u>[How</u>	-	-	+
06	<u>[Thy welfare</u>	-	-	+
07	<u>[Will be</u>	-	-	+
08	<u>[LAND OF PROMISE, LAND OF</u> <u>GLORY!</u> <u>THOU, OF LIFE AND JOY, OUR</u> <u>ONLY STORE!</u> <u>Thine</u>	-	+	+
09	<u>[From Shari,</u>	-	-	+
10	<u>[From along the banks of lowly</u> <u>Boumba Stream,</u>	-	-	+
11	<u>[Mighty as the Buea Mountain</u>	-	-	+
12	<u>[Instil</u>	+	-	+
13	<u>[Foster,</u>	-	-	+
14	<u>[That true</u>	-	-	+
	Total	1	3	14

Table 1: Themes occurrence in Text 1



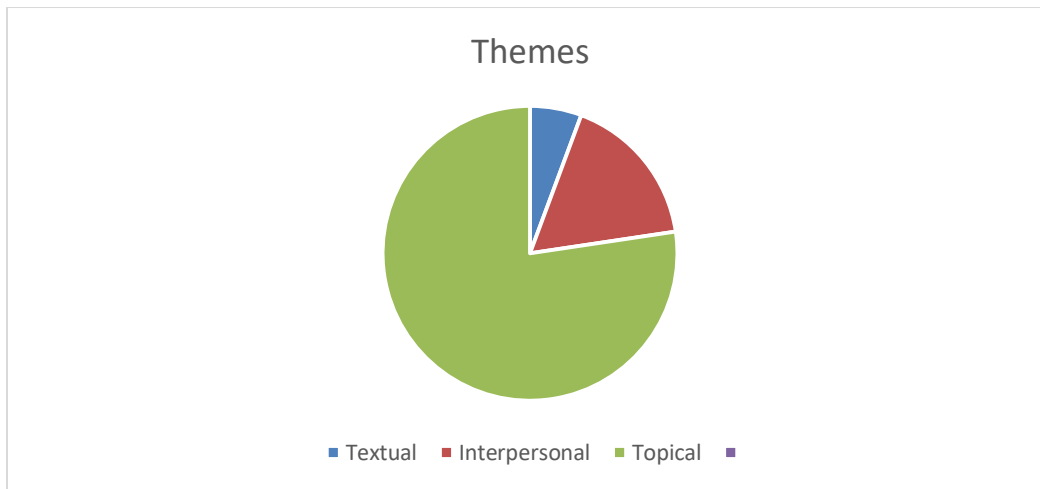
As it can be noticed from the statistics in table 1 and through the graph, topical Theme predominate in the Cameroonian national anthem. They occur 14 times, representing the majority of Themes (77.77%). The statistics also show that there are only 03 interpersonal Themes (16.66%) and 01 Textual Theme (1%). This implies that Text 1 is basically about the description of Cameroon and everything that makes it so special and marvelous. Interpersonal Themes emphasize some favorable predictions if good and wise attitudes are adopted by Cameroonians. The quasi-absence of Textual Themes means that great ideas are simply stated without any preoccupation about enhancement or extension which is a principle of coherence and cohesion.

Table 2 provides the statistics of Themes occurrence in Text 2 (Chadian National Anthem), and these are represented through Graph 2.

N°	Clauses	Themes Types		
		Textual	Interpersonal	Topical
1	[PEOPLE OF CHAD, <u>arise</u>	-	+	+
2	[<u>You</u>	-	-	+
3	- [<u>Your freedom</u>	-	-	+
4	[<u>Lift up</u>	-	-	+
5	[<u>the future</u>	-	-	+
6	[<u>Oh, MY COUNTRY, MAY God</u>	+	+	+
7	[MAY <u>your neighbours</u>	-	+	+
8	[JOYFUL, PEACEFUL, <u>advance</u>]	-	+	+
9	[<u>as you</u>	+	-	+
10	[<u>who</u>	-	-	+
11	[<u>RACE OF THE NORTH AND ITS HUGE HERD RACE OF THE SOUTH which</u>	-	+	+
12	[<u>PASTOALIRISTS, HIGHLANDERS, FISHERS, TRADERS Let's</u>	-	+	+

13	[<u>which</u>	-	-	+
14	[<u>THE HOE IN HANDS, BRAVELY farm</u>	-	++	+
15	[<u>See</u>	-	-	+
16	[<u>that hunger</u>	+	-	+
17	[<u>The farms before you</u>	-	-	+
18	[<u>Let oil</u>	-	-	+
19	[<u>The engineers</u>	-	-	+
20	[<u>Your doctors</u>	-	-	+
21	[<u>AT WORK, STUDENT, without fearing effort</u>	-	+	+
Total clauses		03	09	21

Table 2: Themes occurrence in Text 2



Graph 2: Themes representation

Just like in Text 1, Text 2 presents an important number of topical Themes which occur 21 times, corresponding to 63.63%. As regards interpersonal Themes, they occur 09 times, representing 27.27%. There are only 03 textual Themes (9.09%), meaning that the author of the text has not given a particular attention to cohesive elements. The occurrence of topical Themes signifies that Chadian people (you, fishers, students, doctors) are at the center of the message that is conveyed through the lyrics. As it will be demonstrated in the section on interpretation, this implies that the sons and daughters of Chad have particular attitudes to adopt and actions to take if they are to compete with others and get respected. The occurrence of interpersonal Themes highlights some attitudinal connotation of the message.

Table 3 summarizes the distribution of topical Themes in Text 1 and 2.

Texts	Territories/land (physical elements)	Values	People or concepts	Total
Text1	1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11,	4, 14	5, 6, 7, 12, 13	
Total	07	02	05	14
Text 2	17	3, 21, 14	2, 9, 11, 13, 10, 20, 1, 4, 8, 12, 15,5, 6, 7, 10, 16, 18	
Total	01	03	17	21

Table 2: distribution of topical Themes in Text 1 and 2

The above table reveals that the majority of topical Themes are actualized by *land, mountains, hills, valleys*, (used 07 times, representing 50%) which are actually used as metaphors to describe the cradle land Cameroon in Text 1; whereas *people* and *concepts* are used in thematic position in clauses (5, 6, 7, 12, 13, that is 5 times) to emphasize the sense of duty and unity, as it will be demonstrated through the interpretation of findings. In text 2, people and concepts are most used in thematic position, that is, 17 times (80.95%). This means that the central message of the Text is the role, the attitude, the actions and the mentality of Chadian people.

Table 4 highlights theme Markedness and unmarkedness in Text 1 and 2.

Texts	Themes		
	Marked	Unmarked	Total
Text 1	1,3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12	2, 5, 7, 8, 13, 14	
Total	08 (57.14%)	06 (42.85%)	14 (100%)
Text 2	1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21	
Total	01 (4.76%)	20 (95.23%)	21(100%)

Table 4: Theme markedness and unmarkedness

Table 4 above shows that the Themes are for the most part marked in Text 1 (57.14%) while in Text 2 there is only one marked Theme (4.76%). This signifies that in the Cameroonian national anthem the accent is put on the description of circumstances (*north, south, hills, and valleys, mountains*) to emphasize the magnificent beauty of the country, Cameroon. Actually, the text is written with a lot of preparedness to convey a special message to the sons and daughters of Cameroon. It is not the case in Text 2 which is not actually devoted to the land or other physical aspects but basically to people and their duties or attitudes as mentioned earlier.

5.DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

A remark is to be made before the actual discussion of the findings. The paper is not about a comparative study of the Cameroonian and the Chadian national anthems, but rather about the functions of these anthems based on the premise that these two anthems more or less assume the same functions, taking into account the circumstances in which they were composed.

The analysis of Text 1 discloses that topical Themes occur 14 times, corresponding to 77.77%. These are about *thy soil, thy hills and valleys, dear fatherland, Boumba stream, shari, Mountain* in clauses (1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11) which officiate as actors to which actions are ascribed or carriers to which values are attributed. Actually, Text 1 (Cameroon national Anthem) is more concerned with the physical description of Cameroon. The country is presented as an Eldorado or a land of extraordinary physical diversity. Cameroon is, according to the author, a country of tremendous opportunities. Thus, the author calls on Cameroonian to cherish their country in clauses: **“Thy welfare we will win in toil and love and peace, will be to thy name ever true! Land of promise, land of glory! Thou, of life and joy, our only store! Thine be honor, thine devotion, and deep endearment, for evermore,”**. (7, 8,). This is not possible without an acute sense of unity, devotion, duty and peace. *Cameroonian* or *people* is actualized 5 times in clauses (5, 6, 7, 12, 13). This is aimed at insisting on the role or duties the people of Cameroon must be aware of. Cameroonian must honor their country, that is, they must respect all the symbols that represent the nation: the flag, justice, parliament, presidency, etc. The analysis also reveals that interpersonal Theme are used 3 times in clauses (1, 4, 8), corresponding to 16.66%. These connote an attitude of respect and love towards this beautiful country which is Cameroon. Thus, Cameroon is somehow personified when terms like *Dear fatherland* and *O Cameroon* are used to describe it. The analysis of Text 2 (Chadian national anthem) also uncovers a predominance of topical Themes which come about 21 times, that is, 63.63%. Topical Themes are used in clauses such as **people of chad, arise and take up the task! You have conquered the land and won your rights; race of the north and its huge herd, race of the south, which cultivate the soil, pastoralists, highlanders, fishers, traders let’s be only one people which advances** (1, 2, 11, 12). This emphasizes the Chadian ethnic and cultural diversity presented as some richness rather than a handicap or a problem. It must also be noted that topical Themes are realized *by people, you, pastoralist, students, race of the north, race of the south*, meaning that the message of the anthem is built around unity, courage, and work as highlighted in clauses (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The main function of this anthem is therefore to develop a sense of patriotism based on the aforementioned fundamental values. Merit and respect will result from Chadian right and courageous attitude emphasized through the use of interpersonal Themes in clauses (1, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 21). In fact, the analysis shows that they crop up 09 times (27.27%). Their occurrence signifies that the Text has an attudinal significance actualized through the use of items such as *people of Chad, may God, may your neighbors, bravely* (1, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 21). The author seems to have an authority that enables him to give useful orientations to Chadian people about not only the necessity to believe in God but also the importance of the worth of peace, determination and cohesion.

6. CONCLUSION

Just like constitution, ordinances and laws designed to build a rule of law, national anthems operate as complementary instrument that recalls citizens about fundamental values that foster cohesion

and unity among citizens of a given country. The analysis of the Cameroonian and the Chadian national anthems has confirmed this postulate. In fact, the analysis of Text 1 (Cameroonian national anthem) has disclosed an importance occurrence of topical Themes followed by interpersonal ones. These have highlighted the composer of the anthem's intention to convey a message built around the physical assets or richness of the country to which honor and respect must be devoted. Thus, the Cameroonian national anthem officiates as a means to foster unity, patriotism and cohesion based on fundamental principles of honor and respect. As regards Text 2 (Chadian national anthem), the exploration of the thematic choices reveals an abundant use of Topical themes which focus on people of Chad, encouraging them to toil, to love peace and unity. The ethnic and cultural diversity of the country must be considered as a resource rather than as a disadvantage. Moreover, the use of interpersonal Themes conveys some metaphysical message while it focuses on the respect that Chadian would deserve if they adopt just and courageous attitudes. Thus, the Chadian national anthem conveys a message that is centered on the values of patriotism, unity, peace, freedom and work. The two anthems have therefore common denominators: patriotism and unity and work that would lead to peace and prosperity.

Considering the current situation of poverty, war, corruption, etc. that is prevailing in Cameroon and Chad, it is safe to reason that the two Texts –very rich in terms of lessons and values–have not actually been exploited; their functions have not really been understood and actualized. They may contribute in building peace and therefore enhance development in both Chad and Cameroon if efficient concrete measures are taken to implement the values encoded in them.

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