

**PREDICATED THEMES IN A LITERARY CORPUS: THEIR USE AS
TEXTUAL RESOURCE IN ALAN PATON'S *CRY, THE BELOVED
COUNTRY* (1948)**

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ABSTRACT

This article will show how the frequency of a grammatical structure such as the predicated theme in the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948) written by the South African writer Alan Paton is crucial for the meaning of the novel. The usefulness of this marked construction for textual cohesion and contrastiveness will be explored. Special attention will be paid to the discourse functions of the examples in order to observe the consequences of this grammatical choice in the novel: to highlight, contrast, emphasize feelings, etc.

The use of predicated themes in this novel allows Paton not only to make the text a more coherent unit – a text – but also allows him to draw the text closer to the context of the situation of the reader, drawing the reader ‘into’ a ‘dialogue’ with the issues of the culture of the time, into the ‘cultural dialogue’ of Apartheid South Africa – the dialogue of the black and the white South Africans.

RESUMEN

Este artículo mostrará cómo la frecuencia de una estructura gramatical como la oración hendida en la novela *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948) escrita por el escritor

sudafricano Alan Paton es crucial para expresar el significado de la novela. Se explorará la utilidad de esta construcción sintáctica marcada para el contraste y la cohesión textual. Además, se prestará especial atención a las funciones discursivas de los ejemplos con el fin de observar las consecuencias de esta elección gramatical en la novela: destacar, contrastar, enfatizar sentimientos, etc.

El uso de las oraciones hendidas en esta novela permite a Paton no sólo convertir al texto en una unidad más coherente sino que también le permite acercar el texto al contexto de situación del lector e introducir al lector en un 'diálogo' con los aspectos culturales de su tiempo, es decir, en un diálogo cultural con el Apartheid en Sudáfrica, el diálogo de los negros y los blancos sudafricanos.

Key words: Predicated Themes, context, Alan Paton, Systemic Functional Linguistics, marked syntax.

Palabras clave: Oración hendida, contexto, Alan Paton, Gramática Sistémica Funcional, sintaxis marcada.

1. Introduction

The hypothesis in this article is that the recurrent use of a marked syntactic structure as the predicated theme has certain communicative implications that will be the object of this study. The corpus of examples belongs to *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948), the first published novel written by the South African writer Alan Paton. The analysis will show that the use of predicated themes in the novel is a resource used by the author to highlight certain climatic moments and to reflect the context in which the novel is placed: the apartheid period in South Africa. The predicated theme contrasts with something previously said or highlights a certain fact that is important for the narrative.

This paper will consider the role of predicated themes in the novel under analysis by taking into consideration their function in building meaning in the novel. In this sense, attention will be placed on meaning beyond the clause, as Martin and Rose (2007:1) state:

"[...] we want to focus on the social as it is constructed through texts, on the constitutive role of meanings in social life." Only "it clefts" will be analysed. The corpus consists of 59 examples of this marked syntactic construction in context. The usefulness of this grammatical construction for textual cohesion and contrastiveness will be explored. For this reason, the communicative properties of the structure in context will receive attention in order to explore the relationship between language and context.

The language used by the South African writer Alan Paton in the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948) was employed with a clear social purpose: to describe a social reality. For this reason, the theoretical model of this article is Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL), a social theory which makes clear that reality and experience are described and constructed throughout language and which claims that the way texts are constructed is determined by the functions those texts have in society (Fairclough 1995; Fernández Martínez 2011, Fitzgerald and Young 2006).

Systemic linguists place considerable emphasis on the idea of choice, i.e., language is viewed as a network of interrelated options from which speakers and writers can select according to their communicative needs (Halliday 1978). In consequence, this paper will find out the reasons why Paton uses predicated themes in the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948) the way he does. For this reason, the use of predicated themes will be studied because getting closer to grammar, especially to predicated themes in this study, will be helpful to move closer to the context Paton is describing and to the textual organization of the novel (Martínez Lirola and Smith 2009).

Language and society cannot be separated. Language is realized through text; this implies that texts do not possess intrinsic meanings since meaning emerges according to the way texts are used in social contexts. The language chosen to express a particular meaning determines the way in which that meaning is perceived (Johnstone 2002; Coffin, Donohue and North 2009; Paltridge 2006, Teubert 2010, Young and Harrison 2004).

The author transmits the concrete cultural situation of his time together with the characteristics and social values of that situation through the main topics of the novel and through the use of language (Martínez Lirola 2002a:238; Martínez Lirola 2007a and 2007b).

He attempts to show the negative aspects of that society, and he suggests ways to improve it (Thiong'o 1995:290).

Paton situates *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948) in South Africa during the apartheid period. Apartheid policies included the application of total segregation in such a way that cities were divided into group areas, selecting the population by their racial category according to their identity documents. The purpose of this measure was to eliminate irregular categories through the prohibition of mixed marriages, it was also a means of social control and domination.

2. Definition and analysis of predicated themes

The syntactic structure under study has received different names in literature: Lees (1963) refers to it as a “cleft sentence”, Huddleston (1984) calls it a “cleft construction”, Prince (1978) an “it cleft” and Young (1980) an “it-theme”. Erdmann (1990) terms the structure a “focussing it sentence”. This construction is known in structural linguistics as a cleft sentence since it derives from the division of a simple sentence into two different parts (that constitute different sentences). It normally starts with the pronoun *it* without any meaning, followed by the verb *be*.

Predicated themes start with the pronoun *it* without any meaning, followed by the verb *be*; after that we find the highlighted element and the relative clause at the end of the structure. The structure follows the following formula: “It + “be” + “highlighted element”+ “relative clause”.

In SFL, the term used by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:95) is “predicated theme”, since the elements we find at the beginning of the sentence are introduced with the predicative formula “it +be”. After this, we find a nominal or adverbial group that receives emphasis. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:96) declare that “the predicated theme structure is frequently associated with an explicit formulation of contrast; *it was not...*, *it was...*, *who/which...*; for example [...]: *And, say the authors, it was Mary Magdalen, not Mary the Mother of Jesus, who has been the real, if secret, object of Mariolatry cults down the ages*”.

The primary function of predicated themes is thematic because there is no doubt that by using a predicated theme, emphasis is added to a particular element in the clause (Delin 1992: 71-72, Gómez González and González García 2005:156). In this way, the thematic structure of the clause is manipulated. In this study, the predicated theme is an important structure for the textual organization of discourse for two main reasons¹: (a) it contrasts with something previously said and (b) it highlights a certain fact that is important for the narrative.

3. Functions of predicated themes in *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948)

The exploration of predicated themes in context will show how this structure functions in a literary text because in literature, the exploration of any grammatical aspect has a purpose that is different to analysing other forms of writing. According to Delin (1991:113), predicated themes perform one of these functions: “it may express disagreement with some claim made by a co-participant in the discourse (a call correction); it may continue the discourse by adding new information (a continuation); or it may attempt to fill in variables in propositions which are salient in the discourse (a fill move)”. Predicated themes are used in the novel with three main purposes: to highlight climatic moments, to emphasize feelings, and to emphasize and contrast certain facts that are essential for the narrative.

It is very important to emphasize that this structure is used in climatic moments of the novel. For example, when the person in charge of the reformatory tells Kumalo that it was his son who had fired the gun, he uses a predicated theme:

- *It was he who fired the shot.* (Paton 1948:84)

Absalom Kumalo uses this construction when he confesses to his father that he had fired and declares in front of the judge:

- *They came with me, but it was I who shot the white man.* (Paton 1948:88)

¹ See also the textual analysis of the structure proposed by Martínez Lírola (2002a) and Martínez Lírola and Smith (2009).

- *I said no, I did not know, but it was not Johannes who had killed the white man, it was I myself. But it was Johannes who had struck down the servant of the house.* (Paton 1948:143)

When Stephen Kumalo recommends to his son that he say the truth in front of the judge, he uses the predicated theme:

- It is only the truth you must tell him. (Paton 1948:109)

This is also the structure used by Stephen Kumalo to tell Arthur Jarvis's father that his son had killed Jarvis' son:

- *It was my son that killed your son.* (Paton 1948:155)

The following sentence appears in the speech pronounced by John Kumalo; he shows with emotion that the mines, one of the main sources of the riches of the country, are maintained thanks to the poverty of people working there:

They say that higher wages will cause the mines to close down. Then what is it worth, this mining industry? And why should it be kept alive, if it is only our poverty that keeps it alive? (Paton 1948:159)

In the same way, the narrator chooses this structure to express the hope that Stephen Kumalo had placed in James Jarvis:

[...] he found himself thinking that it was Jarvis and Jarvis alone that could perform the great miracle. (Paton 1948:211)

Finally, the narrator chooses this structure to express the moment at which Absalom Kumalo will be executed at the end of the novel:

The sun would rise soon after five, and it was then it was done, they said. (Paton 1948:234)

The predicated theme clearly disrupts the typical word order of English (SVO). This contrast emphasizes that this structure is an effective way to express feelings; it has also been observed that this syntactic structure is used in situations of climax and as a way to create a social reality. In this sense, the predicated theme contributes to the vividness of the novel. As the following examples will show, the predicated theme is a structure very much used in the novel to express feelings such as sadness, hatred or love. The feeling that we find in most examples of our corpus is fear. The following examples state that predominant in the country where the action of the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948) takes place is the fear that its inhabitants feel:

It is not only the Europeans who are afraid. (Paton 1948:22)

- [...] *They are not all so. There are some white men who give their lives to build up what is broken.*

- *But they are not enough, he said. They are afraid, that is the truth. It is fear that rules this land.* (Paton, 1948:25)

- *It was the suspense, the not-knowing, that made him fear this one thing, [...]*
(Paton 1948:79)

It was only the fear of the chief that made anything come out of these meetings.
(Paton 1948:226)

These feelings reflect what black people felt during the apartheid period, in which Alan Paton frames his novel: the fear that the black population felt of their exploitation, of marginalization and of racial segregation; their hatred of the white man for being the cause of such a precarious situation and their love of the country above all. This structure also shows the worry about the unstable social situation in that moment and in that place:

- *It is not only in your place that there is destruction.* (Paton 1948:22)

I say we shall always have native crime to fear until the native people of this country have worthy purposes to inspire them and worthy goals to work for. For it is only

because they see neither purpose nor goal that they turn to drink and crime and prostitution. (Paton 1948:68)

The narrator shows great emotion when the rain arrives because it was necessary for the place, showing in this way that people were hoping for it; in this example the demonstrative reference is cataphoric to point out the importance of the rain:

But it was this for which all men were waiting, the rain at last. (Paton 1948:207)

Finally, this structure is very appropriate to emphasize and contrast facts in the novel because the predicated theme allows the speaker or hearer to state something in a categorical way, generally in contrast with something already said. This structure is also appropriate to highlight information that we consider essential in a text because it is important for the textual organization of discourse. Predicated themes are very useful in the written form of language because they help the reader to identify where the focus of the sentence is, without needing graphic help such as underlining, italics or capital letters and because the combination theme/new information is marked, and normally of the contrastive type.

The predicated theme places a greater semantic burden on the elements that are more important for the transmission of the message after the introductory formula *it is* or *it was*; in this way, we discover in the first place what is more important for the hearer, following in this way Jespersen's principle of topicality (1909-1949: Vol. VII:54).

Therefore, predicated themes are mainly used for emphasis in the majority of our examples. In the following one, when Stephen Kumalo uses the predicated theme, he insists that his son says the truth in the trial. In discussing the predicated theme in this example, one can observe the emphasis on the highlighted element, in order to point out that this is very important in the development of the action:

- *Be of courage, my son. Do not forget there is a lawyer. But it is only the truth you must tell him.* (Paton 1948:109)

There are also examples in which the predicated theme contrasts with something previously said. The predicated theme is normally associated to the following contrastive formula: *it was not..., it was..., who/which...*, as Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:96) point out, and as we can see in several examples of the novel:

[...], *it is not we who will get more for our labour. It's the white man's shares that will rise [...]* (Paton 1948:34-35)

He knows it is not he, it is these people who have done it. (Paton 1948:191)

The first example, from pages 34-35, is especially relevant because it is related to one of the main topics of the novel: this example establishes a clear contrast between the two main racial groups in South Africa: the whites, those having privileged positions and becoming rich by taking advantage of the other racial group, the black population, those suffering unjust situations and condemned to work in subhuman conditions so that the whites enrich even more.

In the following example, a strong contrast is established between Absalom Kumalo and the other two young men who were accused. The fact that Absalom had been to a reformatory seems to favour the allegation that he is guilty of Arthur Jarvis's murder:

The other two were not reformatory boys. It was he who fired the shot. (Paton 1948:84)

The next example highlights that it was Absalom himself who established a contrast between him and his colleagues, because, although both accompanied him, Absalom declared in the trial that he was the only one who had fired:

- *They came with me, but it was I who shot the white man.* (Paton 1948:88)

In the following example (Paton 1948:94) there is a clear contrast between Stephen Kumalo's feelings: he initially felt fear, that became terror. The contrast of feelings parallels the contrast between two different places: *at Alexandra* and *in your house*.

- *It was at Alexandra that I first grew afraid, but it was in your House, when we heard of the murder, that my fear grew into something too great to be borne.* (Paton 1948:94)

In the following two examples we can see a contrast between the mission that corresponds to the judge and the mission that corresponds to people:

The Judge does not make the Law. It is the People that made the Law. (Paton 1948:136)

It is the duty of the Judge to do justice, but it is only the People that can be just. (Paton 1948:136)

In the next example, Absalom Kumalo establishes a contrast between what he has done and what Johannes did, which is very clear in the second predicated theme of the paragraph. This example is spoken in a very important moment in the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948), when Absalom declares in the trial:

- [...], *but it was not Johannes who had killed the white man, it was I myself. But it was Johannes who had struck down the servant of the house.* (Paton 1948:143)

In the following example (1948: 188), a woman establishes a contrast between the teacher ("umfundisi"), who has substituted for Stephen Kumalo whereas he has been outside the place, and Stephen himself:

- *We do not understand him, she says. It is only our umfundisi that we understand.* (Paton 1948:188)

There are references to the white man in many of the predicated themes in our corpus, in such a way that he is emphasized. The following ones have positive connotations:

It was a white man who brought my father out of darkness. (Paton 1948:25)

It was white men who did this work of mercy, [...] (Paton 1948:80)

- *It was a white man who taught me.* (Paton 1948:228)

It was he also who taught me that we do not work for men, that we work for the land and the people. (Paton 1948:229)

In these predicated themes the author reinforces the idea that in South Africa there are good white men who try to be gentle and contribute to improving the situation, as Arthur Jarvis did, a white man known for being very active at church and for working in favour of African people. The lawyer who will defend Absalom Kumalo during the trial is also another white man, Mr. Carmichael, whose commitment consists in defending Absalom for free, which indicates that he is very generous.

Another important white man in the development of the plot is Mr. James Jarvis, Arthur Jarvis's father, because instead of showing hatred or desiring to take revenge after the murder of his son, he decides to help the population of Ndotsheni. Stephen trusts him to contribute to the development of the place, as the following example shows:

[...] it was Jarvis and Jarvis alone that could perform the great miracle. (Paton 1948:211)²

Using these examples, the author reminds us that not every white in South Africa is against the native population. However, apart from these references, some references to the white man exhibit negative connotations, which point out that the white man is responsible for the unfair situation that pervades South Africa:

² This example shows a submissive attitude to the white's paternalism.

It is the white man's shares that will rise [...] (Paton 1948:34-35)

- *Umfundisi, it is the white man who gave us so little land, it was the white man who took us away from the land to go to work.* (Paton 1948:228)

The previous examples show that predicated themes have developed as a resource of the English language, depending on the communicative needs of the speakers: according to the need for selecting a linguistic form in a moment of discourse that is appropriate, itself depending on the information that the hearer already knows, or according to the need to select a form that highlights certain parts of discourse or establishes a contrast in an appropriate way.

4. The relationship between the generic structure of the novel and the use of predicated themes

Since the present corpus of examples belongs to literature, predicated themes cannot be referred to in isolation; on the contrary, it is necessary to pay attention to the structure under analysis taking into consideration the relationship of its appearance in the novel to the generic structure. In Hasan's words (1989b:96): "We pay attention to the patterning of patterns when it is significant; and in order to be significant the foregrounding must have a semantic consequence."

Following SFL, any variation in language, or the recurrence of patterns such as predicated themes, makes some difference in the construction of meanings, i.e., patterns of language are not used freely since they always have an effect in semantics (Butt 2008:68; van Leeuwen 2008). Predicated themes are one of the linguistic resources used by Alan Paton to make his writing an instance of verbal art because the use of this structure always has a semantic consequence that establishes a clear link between the generic structure of the novel and the precise moment in which the predicated theme appears. The predicated theme is a very significant pattern that plays a crucial role in the construction of meaning, and the creation of context in *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948).

As we know, every genre is defined by obligatory elements in its structure, as Hasan (1989a:113) points out: "Compared to texture, structure is concerned with the more general - less particular - aspects of a text. So it is possible to talk about the realisation of a structural element in terms of a set of general categories; it is not at all necessary to mention specific items as such."

The hypothesis of this paper is that there is a correlation between what has been chosen as a point of departure for the paragraph, chapter, book, and novel (i.e., with the generic structure of the novel), and the predicated themes. In other words, this article is concerned with what is going on in the hyper-themes (the first of a series of themes) of the text, and with how this is related to the incidence of predicated themes (as part of a wider question into all aspects of Paton's textual design). For this analysis the following question was kept in mind: "do predicated themes appear at points in the novel significant in terms of this hyper-theme?"

This novel is characterised by the unity of its structure. It has been observed that there are three major stages in its generic structure that are connected with the three books into which the novel is divided, and with the situation in which the action takes place in the three books: Book One starts in the country and finishes in the city, Book Two takes place in the city, and Book Three starts in the city and finishes in the country (Levey 2001:12).

The first book of *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948) deals mainly with Stephen Kumalo's quest for his son, his sister and his brother in the great, confusing city of Johannesburg. On the level of action he is driven by the pure motive of fatherly and fraternal love. But his deeper motivation lies in Kumalo's experience of a fragmented society broader than the family.

In the third book Stephen Kumalo is engaged in his work of reconstruction in Ndotsheni; at his side are James Jarvis, the white farmer and father of the murdered Arthur, and the young black agricultural educator, who explains that he is "working for country and people" (Paton 1948:228).

Following Callan (1982:37-38), it should be pointed out that Book One, the Book of Kumalo, is concerned at first with the physical quest of the Reverend Stephen Kumalo,

who travels from the African village of Ndotsheni to Johannesburg in search of his sister Gertrude, his son Absalom, and his son John, who have all “disappeared” in the metropolis.

Book Two is the Book of James Jarvis, the father of the murdered man. He sets out from the closed mental world of his own habitual assumptions and prejudices and seeks to understand the liberal spirit revealed to him in his son's reputation and writings. Finally, Book Three is the Book of Restoration. In it, the physical and psychological quests of the earlier books turn toward the spiritual path of redemption.

We have observed a macro-scale in the themes: they are related to the country, the land, or the human beings living in this land. The hyper-theme of the novel as a whole refers to the country, to the South Africa common to all who live there. It is very interesting to notice that Books One and Two start in the same way, i.e., the two following paragraphs are repeated; this is a common technique of Paton's, even in his unpublished fiction:

There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills. These hills are grass-covered and rolling, and they are lovely beyond any singing of it. The road climbs seven miles into them, to Carisbrooke; and from there, if there is no mist, you look down on one of the fairest valleys of Africa. About you there is grass and bracken and you may hear the forlorn crying of the titihoya, one of the birds of the veld. Below you is the valley of the Umzimkulu, on its journey from the Drakensberg to the sea; and beyond and behind the river, great hill after great hill; and beyond and behind them, the mountains of Ingeli and East Griqualand.

The grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. It holds the rain and the mist, and they seep into the ground, feeding the streams in every kloof. It is well-tended, and not too many cattle feed upon it; not too many fires burn it, laying bare the soil.
(Paton 1948:7)

The previous paragraphs show that Paton intends to highlight the life and the beauty of the countryside from the beginning of the novel, which contrasts with existence in large cities such as Johannesburg (Levey 2001: 12). The rest of the themes throughout

the novel refer to the land itself (how rich it is, the social problems we find, etc), or to the human beings' relation to the land, which includes their positive or negative effect upon the land and their dependence on it, how social relations are affected by the land. This is very clear in the way Book Three starts, which describes the precise moment in which Kumalo, his sister's son, and his son's wife go back to his home town, after the terrible things that have happened in the city (described in Book Two):

The engine steams and whistles over the veld of the Transvaal. The white flat hills of the mines drop behind, and the country rolls away as far as the eye can see. They sit all together, Kumalo, and the little boy on his knees, and the girl with her worldly possessions in one of those paper carriers that you find in the shops. The little boy has asked for his mother, but Kumalo tells him she has gone away, and he does not ask any more. (Paton 1948:186)

When we talk about human beings in apartheid South Africa, we need to keep in mind that people were divided by being black or white. This relationship between people and land, and especially between white people and the land, together with the consequences this relationship had for black people and for the social situation, is also connected with the use of predicated themes almost at the end of the novel. In the following examples, the white man is the highlighted element of several predicated themes. Again, some positive and some negative connotations are evident:

-Umfundisi, it was the white man who gave us so little land, it was the white man who took us away from the land to go to work. And we were ignorant also. It is all these things together that have made this valley desolate. Therefore, what this good white man does is only a repayment. (Paton 1948:228)

- I was taught that, umfundisi. It was a white man who taught me. There is not even good farming, he said, without the truth.

- This man was wise.

- It was he also who taught me that we do not work for men, that we work for the land and the people. We do not even work for money, he said. (Paton 1948:229)

It is also interesting to observe that the hyper-rheme (the first of a series of rhemes) of the novel contains two examples of predicated themes. The last paragraph of the novel makes reference to the land, and refers to aspects of it found in the hyper-theme of the novel, such as the Titihoia or the valley of the Umzimkulu. The very last clause refers to the alteration in the social situation that is so necessary, that is 'the dawn' Paton is looking forward to:

Yes, it is the dawn that has come. The titihoya from sleep, and goes about its work of forlorn crying. The sun tips with light the mountains of Angeli and East Griqualand. The great valley of the Umzimkulu is still in darkness, but the light will come there. Ndotsbeni is still in darkness, but the light will come there also. For it is the dawn that has come, as it has come for a thousand centuries, never failing. But when that dawn will come, of our emancipation, from the fear of bondage and the bondage of fear, why, that is a secret. (Paton 1948:236).

From this section it can be concluded that the novel that has been analysed and its context are inseparable. The analysis has shown that the context of the novel is construed by the language choices made by the author, by the semantic choices through which Paton creates his text. In this sense, predicated themes are very useful in the written language because they help the reader to identify where the focus of the sentence is because this structure is oriented towards new information. As Hasan (1989c:52) points out, "text and context are so intimately related that neither concept can be enunciated without the other". Consequently, there is always a relationship between texts and society/culture, i.e., texts are sociologically shaped and they also constitute society and culture. In this sense, the novel under analysis does not have intrinsic meanings since meaning emerges according to the way novels are used in social contexts.

6. Conclusions

This article has concentrated on the analysis of predicated themes in context to observe the reasons why Alan Paton used this structure in the novel. It is evident that a grammatical perspective has been used because grammar is understood as a tool that allows us to study the organization of any text.

The analysis presented in this study has shown how the frequency of a grammatical structure such as the predicated theme is crucial for the meaning of the novel, i.e., the analysis started in grammar and it worked up towards meaning since the latter always emerges from the configuration of lexicogrammatical features. In other words, it is lexicogrammar which gives us clues to provide an interpretation of the meaning of the novel. In this sense, semantics is understood as an interface between grammar and context.

The language used by Paton in the novel has a clear social purpose: to interpret and describe an actual social reality. The kind of language, the grammatical structures used to convey meanings, or to represent reality can alter or influence the way in which the meaning is perceived or interpreted. In other words, semantics is connected with the grammatical structure. For SFL, grammar is connected with meaning since all the different choices in language are meaning-determined.

This research has tried to link the marked syntactic structure under analysis with its use in order to observe the relationship between language, context and function. The different selections made by Paton of a marked syntactic structure such as the predicated theme are determined by the social reality in the novel.

The recurrent use of a certain grammatical pattern such as the predicated theme is always significant from the semantic and the grammatical point of view because there is no doubt that grammar is the means by which we make meanings. The exploration of predicated themes in context has showed how this structure functions in a literary text because in literature, the exploration of any grammatical aspect has a purpose that is different to other forms of writing.

According to the data, from the formal point of view we can conclude that the predicated theme is a marked syntactical structure because it creates a local thematized structure throughout the predication (*it is/it was*), in such a way that the predicative element becomes the marked focus of the information, as we can see in the following example: -

[...], *but it was not Johannes* [...], which belongs to the predicated theme- [...], *but it was not Johannes who had killed the white man, it was I myself* (Paton 1948:143).

The function of predicated themes can be understood if we concentrate for example on the function of the subject as theme. It is well known that the subject normally coincides with the theme. That is the reason why it should be unnecessary to use a special structure to place it in a thematic position. The following example from the corpus will now be rewritten to avoid the use of the predicated theme: - [...], *but it was not Johannes who had killed the white man, it was I myself*. (Paton 1948:143)

If we avoid the use of the predicated theme, the example could read as follows: *Johannes had not killed the white man, I had killed him*. In this way we have lost almost all the contrast between both subjects. In the oral language, it would be possible to mark that contrast with intonation, highlighting “Johannes” and “I”. The predicated theme causes the reader to put emphasis on a specific element of the sentence.

The fact that the predicated theme is used by the protagonists in some of the most important moments of the novel makes clear that we are faced with a structure very much used to highlight a certain aspect of the information or point out feelings or emotions.

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