

Analysis of Squealer's Character in *Animal Farm* Based on Turn-Taking Theory

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Abstract—Squealer in the novella *Animal Farm* is rarely studied. However, as the mouthpiece of the ruling class, Squealer's character is worth exploring. Therefore, this paper intends to study his character on the basis of turn-taking theory. Analysis reveals that, to hold his turn, Squealer employs space-making strategies and monologue, which displays his duplicity and arrogance. Besides, he seizes the chance to take his turn by means of interruptions with irrelevant words, indicating his indifference and selfishness. When yielding his turn, he nominates other animals with threatening words, showing his hypocrisy and cunning. Conclusion is drawn that, for the sake of his class, Squealer tends to muzzle other animals' thought to consolidate their rule.

Index Terms—Turn taking theory, character, space-making strategies, monologue, interruption, nomination.

I. INTRODUCTION

Animal Farm [1] was written by George Orwell, a renowned British writer. It was published in 1945 in England. In this novella, a group of animals on the "Manor farm" revolt and drive their incompetent owner away and change its name into "Animal Farm". Afterwards, pigs become farm leaders, but they just scramble for power and wealth. With the help of other pigs, Napoleon establishes a totalitarian government. t. Many years later, they become greedy and corrupt, and behave like their human neighbors. In the end, other animals have to live a miserable and unfair life.

Animal Farm has attracted a large number of researchers and scholars' attention both at abroad and home. Some researchers keep a watchful eye on thematic discussion. Rodden (1999) points out that *Animal Farm* is a political allegory in the name of a beast fable. The characters of pig leaders are closely connected to the history of Soviet Union [2]. Du Ning (2015) deems that since pig leaders revise the "Seven Commandments" over and over stealthily, they lay a clamp on the animals and keep their supremacy [3]. Li Tian (2012) reveals these pigs on the farm who keep the power, degenerate into the totalitarian governors. The goal to establish a liberal and equal community eventually fails. [4]. Jing Yuan (2013) concentrates on the humanistic theme and points out that pig leaders, who forget why they overthrow humans, bend themselves to violating the freedom and equality, suppressing individuality and degenerating humanity [5]. Li Taotao (2017) explores the theme from feminist interpretation and states that female characters

subordinate to the male characters and stay in a marginalized position [6]. Some researchers pay attention to rhetorical devices. They resort to irony, black humor, simile, exaggeration, rhetoric of Aristotle and metaphor to discuss the novella.

It cannot be denied that the researches on themes and rhetorical devices from the different perspectives are conducive to the comprehensive understandings to *Animal Farm*. However, it is with great regret that very few scholars pay their attention to the research of Squealer's character in the novella. As a politician propagator, Squealer's character has been studied in very few works. Huang Ye (2014) discusses Squealer's character in accordance with the relationship between power and discourse [7]. Yet there is still plenty of room for interpretation of Squealer's character.

In the novella, Squealer, who is a typical character of politician propagator, is slyness, cunning, eloquence and hypocrisy. He manipulates the discourse to control animals' thoughts and consolidate the pigs' despotism. Based on the turn-taking theory, this thesis combines Squealer's discourse, aiming to give a new perspective to explore *Animal Farm*.

II. TURN-TAKING THEORY

In the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, the term "turn-taking" is defined as "in conversation, the roles of speaker and listener change constantly. The person who speaks first becomes a listener as soon as the person addressed takes his or her turn in the conversation by beginning to speak". Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson are regarded as the forerunners in turn-taking theory. Their two essays exert great influences on the late development of turn-taking theory.

Turn-taking theory consists of three aspects. The first aspect is turn-yielding. In other words, if the present speaker designates the listener by utilizing some means such as eye-contacts or nomination to talk, and the listener signals his willingness to say something and indeed grasps the chance, the speaker achieves the purpose of giving up his opportunity of talking. The second aspect is turn-taking. It happens in such situation where the person fights for the chance to speak employing some skills, such as interruption or self-selection. The third one is turn-holding. Holding the turn means the current speaker is unwilling to give up his chance of talking and he prefers to using some tactics to maintain his turn.

Compared with the studies abroad, domestic research begins relatively late. Since 1980s, turn-taking theory has been introduced into China and chiefly applied into the field of plays. Based on turn-taking theory, Li and Yu (2001:46) build up a framework to analyze the power relations among

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the characters [8]. The framework is divided into five parts, including the initiation and control of topics; turn-length; turn-type; times of interruption and monologue; turn-control strategies. In order to analyze Squealer's character, some revisions are made in the following Table I.

TABLE I: TURN-TAKING THEORY AND WHAT SQUEALER EMPLOYS

Turn-taking theory	Squealer employs
Turn-holding	Space-making strategies; monologue
Turn-taking	Interruption
Turn-yielding	Nomination

III. ANALYSIS OF SQUEALER'S CHARACTER IN *ANIMAL FARM*

A. Squealer Holds the Turn

1) Space-making strategies

If the current speaker intends to hold his turn, he may employ space-making strategies, such as linking words. Linking words, including coordinate conjunctions has the function to gain a cohesive effect. Without linking words, the sentence is just like pieces and becomes short. In principle, if the more coordinating conjunctions the current speaker employs, the longer his turn-length becomes and the easier he holds his turn.

Example 1:

Muriel: (Spells the Fourth Commandment inscribed on the wall) *It says, 'No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets'.*

Squealer: (Happens to be passing) *You have heard then, comrades, that we pigs now sleep in the beds of the farmhouse? And why not? You did not suppose, surely, that there was ever a ruling against beds? A bed merely means a place to sleep in. A pile of straw in a stall is a bed, properly regarded. The rule was against sheets, which are a human invention. We have removed the sheets from the farmhouse beds, and sleep between blankets. And very comfortable beds they are too! But not more comfortable. than we need, I can tell you, comrades, with all the brain-work we have to do nowadays. You would not rob us of our repose, would you, comrades? You would not have us too tired to carry out our duties? Surely none of you wishes to see Jones back? (Orwell, 2014: 55-56)*

TABLE II: SPACE-MAKING STRATEGIES BY COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

Holding the Turn	Coordinating Conjunctions	Turn-length
Squealer	4 (and: 3; but: 1)	114 words
Animals	0 (and: 0; but: 0)	11 words

As shown in Table II, the turn-length of Squealer reaches to 114 words. In order to lengthen his conversation, Squealer makes use of coordinating conjunctions 4 times in total, "and" 3 times and "but" once respectively. On the contrary, the whole turn length of Muriel only reaches to 11 words. Though she is curious about the content of "the Fourth Commandment" inscribed on the wall, she makes no use of coordinating conjunctions to extend her words. Evidently, the turn-length of Squealer is longer than Muriel.

In reality, the speaker who remains advantageous position tends to show power, express feelings and achieve goals. Squealer straightforward expresses that pigs, as the ruling class, do the heavy brain-work and need a place to repose. He uses "and", "but" in case of being interrupted. Pigs are actually in pursuit of values of hedonism and do nothing. But in order to live a comfortable life, Squealer distorts the concepts of "sheets" and "blankets". His real intention is to convey a message that it is reasonable for pigs to sleep in the beds. Animals could have realized that sleeping either on the sheets or with the blankets is a kind of privilege. Thus, compared with the pigs, they are ineloquent and incapable of grasping the turn to speak. It is concluded that Squealer is a dishonest politician who always twists the truth.

Subordinating conjunctions can be used to carry on the conversation in a certain context. That means, if a speaker wants to maintain his turn, he usually informs the listeners in advance with some words like "since", "when", which means when the present speaker adopts a subordinate clause he will not be interrupted in a general way and maintains his turn. Accordingly, the turn-length inevitably gets longer.

Example 2:

Squealer: *Snowball has sold himself to Frederick of Pinchfield Farm, who is even now plotting to attack us and take our farm away from us! Snowball is to act as his guide when the attack begins. But there is worse than that. We had thought that Snowball's rebellion was caused simply by his vanity and ambition. But we were wrong, comrades. Do you know what the real reason was? Snowball was in league with Jones from the very start. He was Jones's secret agent all the time. It has all been proved by documents which he left behind him and which we have only just discovered. To my mind this explains a great deal, comrades. Did we not see for ourselves how he attempted--fortunately without success--to get us defeated and destroyed at the Battle of the Cowshed.*

Boxer: *I do not believe that. Snowball fought bravely at the Battle of the Cowshed. I saw him myself. Did we not give him 'Animal Hero, first Class,' immediately afterwards... (Orwell, 2014: 65)*

TABLE III: SPACE-MAKING STRATEGIES BY SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

Holding the Turn	Subordinating Conjunctions	Turn-length
Squealer	7 (who:1; when:1; that:1; what:1; which:2; how:1)	129 words
Animals	0	29 words

As shown in Table III, Squealer adopts subordinating conjunctions 7 times totally to extend his turn-length. The turn-length of Squealer reaches to 129 words. He frames Snowball up in words and fools other animals into believing that Snowball is a secret agent of humans. Reversely, Boxer does not use subordinating conjunctions and his turn-length has merely 29 words. He uses an interrogative sentence to prove Snowball is not a traitor. But the interrogative sentence also indicates his uncertainty about his own memory. It implies that animals on the farm are brainwashed little by little.

Subordinating conjunctions serve certain purposes. Here,

the dual purposes of Squealer can be explored. First, Squealer attacks Snowball in words is to distort the history. The fact is that Snowball once makes a contribution to the resistance of human aggression. But after contending for power and wealth, Snowball is ousted. Hence, once something bad happens on the farm, Squealer calls white black. Second, he paves the way for the next purges for he considers the thought of some animals are not in alignment with pigs. In short, it uncovers that Squealer is a propagandist who distorts history with evil intentions.

2) Monologue

Monologue is a kind of rather dismissive behavior that the current speaker ignores the content of the topic the previous speaker talks while saying something about his own content. It maximally denies there is an equal and responsive consciousness of others except oneself. In monologue, monologist neither expects replies from others nor pays attention to others' answers. He turns a deaf ear to others and does not believe that others' words sometimes have a decisive strength to change something in his world consciousness. Sometimes it can strike a chord with listeners in certain context, but it is a rather rude behavior.

Example 3:

Squealer: *It was the most affecting sight I have ever seen! I was at his bedside at the very last. And at the end, almost too weak to speak, he whispered in my ear that his sole sorrow was to have passed on before the windmill was finished. 'Forward, comrades!' he whispered. 'Forward in the name of the Rebellion. Long live Animal Farm! Long live Comrade Napoleon! Napoleon is always right. 'Those were his very last words, comrades.* (Orwell, 2014: 95)

Animals on the farm witness Boxer, who is injured, is sent to the knacker with their own eyes. However, they are also informed that Boxer is delivered to the hospital and dies in peace in spite of receiving good treatment. Animals feel confused. Squealer at that moment comes. He neither participates in the discussion nor gives a response to animals' confusion. Instead, he starts his long monologue with a fabricated story. In brief, he succeeds to find a remedy to convince animals. In his own story, he accompanies Boxer at his bedside and is touched by Boxer's last words, which is full of praise to Napoleon. In this way, he not only maintains his turn through extending his turn-length, but also conveys his intention that animals need to spare no effort to work and keep loyalty to Napoleon.

Through monologue, Squealer shifts the topic in his favor and succeeds in avoiding animals' interruption. The consequence of this faked story is that all animals are persuaded. Without a shadow of doubt, what Squealer tells resonates with them. As a matter of fact, as Squealer misleads the animals with fake stories time and again, he robs animals of dignity. Regrettably, animals' ability to tell right from wrong is weakened by the constant lies. It is no exaggeration to say that Squealer is an indifferent and selfish liar.

B. Squealer Takes the Turn

Tannen (1990) reckons people should take the content of conversations into account when judging the interruption [9]. In that case, a speaker's interruption has two forms, disruptive interruption and non-disruptive interruption. When

interruption fails to happen in the right transition-relevance place (TRP), it belongs to disruptive interruption. Situation of non-disruptive interruption occurs when a speaker takes the turn at the right TRP to show his own attentiveness, disagreement to abide by what the previous speaker says. Just as what Li Yue'e and Shen Zhiqi present (2003:28) that once the current speaker begins a new round conversion without pause or hesitation as soon as the previous speaker stops talking, he utilizes non-disruptive interruption [10].

Example 4:

Squealer: *The enemy was in occupation of this very ground that we stand upon. And now, thanks to the leadership of Comrade Napoleon, we have won every inch of it back again.*

Boxer: *Then we have won back what we had before.*

Squealer: *That is our victory.* (Orwell, 2014: 82)

Interruption is associated with power and social status. A powerful and high-status speaker is obviously more likely to have the chance to interrupt others. The social status between Squealer and Boxer is obviously unequal. After the windmill fight, pigs stop expressing their condolences to the animals but fire the gun for victory. Boxer raises his doubt that animals only win back the ground they used to possess. What he really means is that animals actually fail in the war against humans because some animals make great sacrifices. However, Squealer takes the turn by displaying his own attentiveness and manifesting his disapproval to Boxer's words. He insists that animals win victory rather than just win back what they possess before.

It is not hard to conclude that the struggle for power of pig leaders is a journey of enjoyment and corruption. After overthrowing humans, pigs become the new leaders who are in charge of power and abuse the power. They are never concerned for those animals who lose their lives in the war at all. In this example, Squealer only puts high priority on the interest of pigs who crave for greatness and success. Therefore, he takes the turn by replying his disagreement. In this example, Squealer gives top priority to the interest of pigs. Therefore, he is an unsympathetic mouthpiece.

C. Squealer Yields the Turn

In the light of Xu (2017:22), two conditions should be co-occurred to fulfill nomination [11]. For one thing, the current speaker designates the listener by calling his/him name or title, even making a gesture. For another, the current speaker needs to ask a question, such as "yes-no question", "wh-question", "alternative question" or "tag question" (Chen, 2014:21) [12]. To show politeness, the nominated one continues the topic as is required through answering questions or offering some information. Only when both the speaker and the listener participate in the discourse will the communication continue. Nomination is conducive to creating a harmonious and cooperative atmosphere about further discussion.

Example 5:

Squealer: *Discipline, comrades, iron discipline! That is the watchword for today. One false step, and our enemies would be upon us. Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?*

Boxer: *If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right.*
(Orwell, 2014: 46)

In this example, Squealer firstly designates the next speaker with an intimate calling “comrades”. Then, he yields his turn by speaking intentionally “you do not want Jones back”. Actually, “you do not want Jones back” is a declarative sentence which finishes with a full stop. But Squealer raises his tone and completes his words with a question mark. Meantime, his words implies that animals are not given room for disobedience. Boxer takes the turn as the response to Squealer’s question. Simultaneously, he shows his loyalty and personality cult to Napoleon, which makes the conversation continue smoothly and acquire a natural effect.

The speaker who uses the nomination has different purposes, such as to show his politeness, or encourage the listener to share his opinion. In practice, however, Squealer adopts nomination with intimidatory intention to suppress animals’ will of talking. Squealer apparently yields the turn for the purpose of political power. This shows that he is expert in manipulating words and creating something out of nothing.

IV. CONCLUSION

Everyone has his own way of speaking. And a person’s personalities or characteristics can be judged by this. The analysis shows that, in the first place, Squealer holds the turn mainly through the space-making strategies and monologue to extend his turn-length. What is more, he is adept in taking the turn by the means of interruption. Last but not least, Squealer yields the turn by nominating. Although he yields his turn, he is out of his own class’s political goal.

Therefore, this study reveals a fact that Squealer has the characteristics of arrogance, indifference, ruthlessness, selfishness, as well as the ability of twisting facts and distorting history. The result comes that animals on the farm are deprived of the rights of speaking and have long time been silenced and sidelined. By exploring Squealer’s character based on the turn-taking theory, this paper is expected to provide a new perspective for the understanding of *Animal Farm*.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Each author's contribution to this work is presented as follows:

Yindi Chen collected materials, conducted research and

wrote the paper.

Meiyan Liu proposed revision suggestions and modified the grammatical errors.

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