



## Literature

*Elixir Literature* 45 (2012) 7801-7806

*Elixir*  
ISSN: 2229-712X

# Syntactic analysis of George Orwell animal farm

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received: 12 February 2012;

Received in revised form:

17 March 2012;

Accepted: 6 April 2012;

### Keywords

Syntactic Analysis,  
Syntactic functions,  
Simple sentence,  
Paratactic sentence type,  
Hypotactic sentence types,  
Cohesion.

### ABSTRACT

This study sets out to analyze the syntactic analysis of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as a way of providing an alternative reading of the text. The studies examine the syntactic functions of some sentence types, cohesion in relation to the text and reference function. All these are investigated. Thus, the principal aim of this study is to show how some syntactic features contribute to the elucidation of the message of the text and thereby enhancing its readability.

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### Introduction

Literature and language are too related phenomena. The former which is created through the latter is one of the means of bringing to focus the resources and potentials of language. The first depends largely on the second for its existence. Suffice it to say that without language there cannot be literature.

One of the various ways of appreciating literature is to study the language of its expression. The study of the language of literature is way of explicating literary discourse. In other words, language is a medium for human interaction, an instrument through which people communicate with one another, exchange thoughts, and understand each other. This is because it constitutes a shared meaning potential, at once as a part of experience and an inter subjective interpretation of experience. Hence of this century's foremost linguist, Noam Chomsky (1972) says a number of questions might lead one to undertake a study of language. Personally he enthused, 'I am primarily intrigued by the possibility of learning something, from the study of language that will bring to light inherent properties of the human mind'.

*Animal Farm* was written by George Orwell who wrote several articles, essays and novels. This text was published in 1945 as one of his famous novels. However, today most of his critics agree on one basic point, which is that the fame and prestige which has been Orwell's over the years have rested solidly on his last novels, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen eighty four*. Orwell's concern in *Animal Farm* is based on totalitarianism as a political concept and the effect of absolute power in the lives of ordinary citizens in a political entity controlled by a small clique of people.

There are four characters that are of paramount important for the realization of Orwell's objectives in the text. The four characters are Mr. Jones, the owner of Manor Farm where the animals' revolution takes place, Old Major, Snowball and Napoleon.

Since the writer is an individual who constructs his private linguistic universe, and through his utterance gives hints as to its

nature, Discourse Analysis (DA) can make more explicit the classical approaches to the content analysis of the text (Uhunmwangho, 1989). Therefore, this study will be purely based on Syntactic Analysis of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

### Syntactic patterns in animal farm:

The way words are arranged in sentences is syntax and every language has its own way of word ordering. In English Language, the system of ordering sentences has taken different forms with the rise of linguistic. The novel like other genres of literature is developed from the lowest choice to the highest arrangement of words. An author makes his novel worth its texture with the possible choices he makes. Ohmann (1971) warns the creative writer thus:

... if he strays from grammatical patterns, he does not thereby leave language or reason behind: if anything, he draws the more deeply on linguistic structure and on the processes of human understanding that are explicit in our Use of well-formed sentences.

Widdowson (1975) adds that there is always a struggle by the creative writer to devise language patterns that will convey his individual personal vision. This shows that the writer utilizes syntax in fashioning his words according to his vision or message. This shows that the creative writer struggles within his limited choice of syntax to create literature. Halliday (1971) emphasizes that:

The system of available option is the 'grammar' of the language and the speaker or writer selects within this system: not in vacuum, but in the context of speech situation.

Syntax forms the root of the novelist's creative productions. The choice makes the meaning needed in order to build to build the novel. It also shows relatively of form and structure, ideas and meaning, and theme. Writers deviate in choices within the system in order to draw attention or foreground meaning.

Syntactic types in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* will be approached from the formal perspective that is looking at the formal properties of the sentence. Hence the three major formal types as 'simple' 'compound' and 'complex' can be usefull

y exhibited for textual strength. Closely related to the 'compound' and 'complex' types are concepts like 'paratactic' 'hypotactic' which was also discussed.

### **The Simple Sentence Types**

George Orwell makes good use of simple sentences in the text. They feature frequently whether in narrative, descriptive or dialogue.

#### **Some examples are:**

1. 'Mrs. Jones was already snoring' (1)
2. 'I have little more to say' (6)
3. 'Let us put it to the vote' (6)
4. 'His body was buried at the foot of the orchard.' (9)
5. 'So were the whips' (2)
6. 'Boxer was the admiration of everybody?' (17)
7. 'The men gave a shout of triumph.' (25)
8. 'The body did not stir'. (26)
9. 'The only good human being is dead one'. (27)
10. 'The animals know that this was not the case'. (45)

All the ten sentences above are simple sentences. Each contains an independent clause. Example (1) is the last sentence of the opening paragraph of the novel. It can be taken to be the point of departure of the narrative. The introducing paragraph of the novel ends with a simple sentence. This may be deliberate since it foregrounds the kind of simplicity that characterizes the text.

Example (1) means that all the events carried out by Mr. Jones of the manor farm in this paragraph had taken place while Mrs. Jones was already asleep. This sentence sets out the temporal ambit of the narrative as it tells us the time Mr. Jones returned. It also foregrounds the fact that up till this time, the animals were still unfed preparing the cogent grounds for the rebellion that followed. Example (2) is the first sentence in paragraph eighteen still in chapter (1).

The other examples picked randomly from the text show that simple sentences are used frequently. These simple sentences contribute to the readability of the novel. Since they are usually easy to read and understand, they make it possible for the average reader to read and comprehend the message of the text. For instance, Orwell made use of simple sentences up twenty times from chapter one through chapter three of the text.

'I have little more to say' means that "he" old major used the statement to remind the animals their duty of enmity towards man and all his ways.

Old major reminded also to know that whatever goes upon two legs, is an enemy, and what goes upon four legs, and has wings is a friend.

'Let us put it to vote' is a proposition to find out whether rats are comrade or not. His body was buried at the foot of the orchard is symbolic statement. Symbolic in the sense that the foot of the orchard where Old Major was buried will serve as a tomb for a hero and as a mark of respect and honour.

'So were the whips' means that as all the weapons of oppression such as the bits, the nose-rings, the dog chains, the cruel knives with which Mr. Jones used to castrate the pigs and lambs were flung down the well, so were the whips thrown off and set ablaze. 'Boxer was the admiration of everybody' means that he was loved and admired by everyone in the farm for his hard work...

The next sentence is (7) 'The men gave a shout of triumph' means that the who engaged in the second attacked launched by Snowball against human beings who approached the farm building emerged victorious, and this made them gave a shout of

triumph. 'The boy did not stir' means that the boy is dead. In sympathy, Boxer made the following statements:

'He is dead', said Boxer sorrowfully. I had no intentions of doing that I forgot that I was wearing iron shoes.

#### **Who will believe that I did not do this on purpose?'(26)**

Here again, Orwell employs the use of simple sentences in the Boxer's statement who felt so sorry about the death of the baby. This shows easy readability and understanding of the text as a result of its simplicity.

'The only good human being is dead one' (27). Here, Boxer need not be sentimental about the dead boy. It goes further to mean that in the course of war anybody can be affected no matter the age. According to Snowball, 'No sentimentality comrade'! War is war.

'The only good human being is a dead one! (27). This can also be interpreted to mean that, according to the conclusions of the animals, no matter the age, human beings is bad whether big or small. Therefore, Boxer should not be remorseful about the death of the boy.

The tenth sentence 'The animals knew that this was not the case' (45) can be interpreted to mean a kind of deceit on the part of the human beings. The following excerpts attest to this:

Out of spite, the human beings pretended not to believe that it was Snowball who had destroyed the Windmill, they said that it has fallen down because the walls were too thin. These animals knew that this was not the case (45).Orwell stylistically used a reported speech in the excerpt above. Example below:

They said that it had fallen down because the walls were too thin? Also worthy of note is the use of chain of simple sentences **within the text as in the following excerpts:**

1. 'It was a bitter winter' (1)
2. 'There is work to be done'(2)
3. "In January food fell short'(3)
4. 'The dogs saw to it that these orders were carried out'(4)
5. 'Nine hens had died in the mean time'(5)
6. 'All these while no more had been seen of Snowball'(6)
7. 'Napoleon decreed that there should be a full investigation into Snowball's activities(7)
8. 'The animals were thoroughly frightened (8)
9. 'Do you know what the real reason was!'(9)
10. 'Snowball was in league with Jones from the very start'(10)
11. 'This was a wickedness far outdoing Snowball's destruction of the Windmill' (11)

In the excerpt above which is part of a narrative passage, are eleven simple sentences. It should be quickly be pointed out that treating sentences (5) (6) (8), and (9) as simple sentences is deliberate, (7) is an interrogative sentences; while (9) is an exclamatory sentence. They are considered as simple because of their internal constituents (thus ignoring the process that transformed them from statements to questions) and to exclamation in the case of (9).

The use of eleven simple sentences consecutively in the excerpt is to expose the multitude of thought going on in squealer's mind. The thought are so disjointed that they can best be described using simple sentence.

Orwell's use of simple and short sentences contributes in no small measure to the simplicity of his style as well as easy readability of the text *Animal Farm*.

It is of great importance to note that Orwell also employed the use of Paratactic Sentence Types in the text as can be seen below.

### Paratactic Sentence Types

For the purpose of this study, we shall take a paratactic or compound sentence to be one that contains at least two independent clauses must join together by a linker or any element that has the property of joining structures of equal status, like, 'and' 'or' 'a comma', etc. Some examples of compound sentences in the text are:

(12) the hens perched themselves on the Windmills, The pigeons fluted up to the raptors, the sheep and cows lay down behind the pigs and began to chew the cud (1-2).

(13) A white strip down his nose gave him a somewhat stupid Appearance, and in fact he was not of first-rate intelligence, But he was universally respected for his steadiness of Character and tremendous power of work (2).

(14) The earth was like iron, and nothing could be done in the field (29).

(15) They worked diligently, hardly raising their faces from the ground, and not knowing whether to be more frightened of the pigs or the humans visitors. (84).

(16) That gave the animals pause, and there was a hush (75).

The instances above are representative of the compound sentences employed by Orwell A characteristic feature of each of the sentences is to bring related ideas or events together in our sentences. Sentence (12) for instances, brings different ideas describing the various actions and positions assumed by some of the animals, the hens, the pigeons, and the sheep and cows to be precise. It contains two asyndetic coordinators (the comma) and two syndetic ones ('but' and 'and'). Sentence (13) brings six related events together. The events described in the sentence, therefore are the appearance of Boxer, which dwelt on stupidity and lack of first-rate intelligence. Orwell again described Boxer in the following manner:

A white stripe down his nose gave him a some what stupid appearance and in fact was universally respected for his steadiness of character and tremendous powers of work (2).

The above description of Boxer means that though Boxer looks somewhat stupid in appearance and not of first-rate intelligence, but he was generally respected for his steadiness of character and hard work. It was not surprising therefore that his slogan was usually 'I will work harder'. One other foreground feature of the sentence is the use of the syndetic coordinator 'and' used twice. The use of 'and' is a device of vivid description of Boxer's appearance. Sentence (14) is climatic in nature. It describes the nature of the earth in the month of January, which made their work in the field difficult. The essence shows dry and hard weather. Orwell in his use of adjective described the weather as 'bitterly hard weather'. Sentence (15) described the reactions of the hens who on hearing about the plans as announced by Squealer that the hens had just come to lie again, must surrender their eggs. On hearing, they raised a terrible outcry. On this note, Orwell once again described the reactions of the hens as follows: They had been warned earlier that his sacrifice might be necessary, but had not believed that it would really happen. (47).

This sentence is also a reminder of what had been previously planned or a kind of proposal to make the hens never thought it will actually be a reality hence they raised a terrible outcry. Orwell's narrative in the following excerpts:

One Sunday morning Squealer announced that the hens, which had just come to lie again, must surrender their eggs.

Napoleon had accepted, through whimper, a contract for four hundred eggs a week.

The price of these would pay for enough grain and meal to keep the farm going till summer came on and conditions were easier. (47)

The terrible outcry raised by the hens on the above excerpt, functions as an adjectival clause modifying the verb 'outcry'. Sentence (15) and (16) are both descriptive. The sentences exposed the confused state of the animals from the point of view of the author. The confusion arose from the fact that the first time animals and human beings were meeting on terms of equality. The animals did not know whether to be more frightened of the pigs or of the human visitors. Sentence (15) for instance was used by Orwell to describe the confused state of the animals when the human visitor came to the farm. His description:

A week later, in the afternoon, a number of dog-cart drove up to the farm. A deputation of neighbouring farmers had been invited to make a tour of inspection.

They were shown all over the farm, and expressed great admiration for everything they saw, especially the windmill.

The animals were weeding the turnip field. They worked diligently, hardly raising their faces from the ground, and not knowing whether to be more frightened of the pigs or of the human visitors (84).

The description of the presence of the human visitors to the animal farm shows the confused state of the animals at the sight of the human visitors. This is so because it was an earlier agreement that "whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy". Now that human visitors have been invited to inspect the farm, they did not know whether to be more frightened of the pigs or of the human visitors. The animals see the human beings as enemies who cheat on them. Sentence (16) described the actions of the animals when they were certain about the inscription on the side of the van that took Boxer away from the farm. The animal became silent because they were now convinced that Boxer had been taken to the slaughter to be slaughtered. The sequencing of the clause is fore grounded. Man is a device adopted by Orwell to build up tension in the reader. By the time he finishes reading about the intimidation and maltreatment meted on the animals by man who only consumes but never produces, I want to stand up and challenge it.

It is also of vital importance to identify and analyses some chain of compound sentences employed by George Orwell in text. This can be seen as following excerpts:

1. 'This had been long expected, and all preparation had been made' (25)

2. 'The pellets scored blood treats along Snowball's back, and a sheep dropped dead' (26)

3. 'In April, animal farm was proclaimed a republic and it has become necessary to elect a president.' (72)

4. 'The truest happiness, he said, lay in working hard and living frugally.' (80)

The excerpts above are purely descriptive in nature which shows that Orwell uses compound sentences throughout. The first sentence for instance describes the expectations of the animals in preparations for the war between Jones men and the animals. Mr. Jones and his men attempted a rapture of the farm. The following is the description of the encounter: Jones and all his men, with half a dozen others from Foxwood and Pinch - field had entered the five-barred gate and were coming up the cart track that led to the farm.

They were all carrying sticks, except Jones, who was marching ahead with a gun in his hands. Obviously they were going to attempt the capture of the farm. (75).

In the light of this, the animals had made adequate preparation towards this as they (animals) had long expected the attack. The lexical items such as stick and guns are weapons of war shown by Orwell as instrument used by human beings to maltreat, intimidate and oppress the animals. Sentence (20) describes the effects of the attack launched by Jones and his men. According to Orwell: 'The pellets scored bloody streaks along Snowball's back and a sheep dropped dead'. (26) This means that the pellets from the gun shot by Mr. Jones killed one of the sheep in the farm. Sentences (3) and (4) are both compound sentences describing various events. This Orwell successfully did for easy description and comprehension.

The study also aims at the use of the hypotactic sentence type employed by Orwell for a vivid description of the events contained in the book *Animal Farm*.

### The Hypotactic Sentence Type

A complex sentence therefore is one that contains at least one independent and dependent clause. The dependent clause(s) is or are usually bound to the independent one(s) by a binder-any element that joins structures of unequal status together like 'because', 'if', 'as', 'when', 'while', 'a comma, etc.

1. 'In glowing sentences he painted a picture of animal farm: as it might be when sordid labour was lifted from the animal's backs' (30)
2. 'Comrades he said, I trust that every animal here appreciate the sacrifice that comrades Napoleon had made in taking this extra labour upon himself' (35).
3. 'The four young pigs who had protested when Napoleon abolished the meetings raised their voices timidly, but they were promptly silenced by a tremendous growling from the dogs' (40).
4. 'Every human being held it as an article of faith that the farm would go bankrupt, sooner or later, and, that the Windmill would be a failure' (41)

The first complex sentence above contains three Clauses; the first an independent clause, the second and third are dependent clauses. The other two clauses as well as their actions are dependent on the first one.

The three however, have similar structures. Sentences(20) also contains three clauses of which the first clause is an independent one while the other two clauses are dependent on the first one. There is balance between independent and dependent clauses. Sentences (1) means that Snowball's eloquence speech was able to highlight a picture of how *Animal Farm* would look like when sordid labour was lifted from the animal's back.

That is, they will no longer use chaff-cutter and turnip-slicers in the farm, rather it will be used of electricity which could operate threshing machines, ploughs, harrows, rollers, reapers, and electric light, hot and cold water and electric heater.

This eloquence speech of Snowball put him at an edge over Napoleon.

It is interesting to note that both sentence (1) and (2) are political as shown by Orwell in the describing the rivalry between Napoleon and Snowball. Orwell described Napoleon as being better at canvassing support for him in between times, while Snowball was described as a brilliant and an eloquence speaker (28). Sentence (3) is a complex sentence, which

describes the way and manner the pigs were intimidated by the dogs. The intimidation arose as a result of the pigs' protest against the abolition of Sunday a meeting by Napoleon. Sentence(4) contains five clauses as well. The first sentence is an independent one while the fifth clause is a dependent clause. The second, third and four clauses are dependent on the first because they do not express a complete thought.

Besides the use of compound and complex sentences, Orwell also made use of sentences that contain interjections (exclamations) in the book of discourse. Interjections are words used to express strong feelings, such as surprise, anger, excitement, disgust, joy, enthusiasm. They are usually followed by an exclamation mark (!), and have no grammatical relationship with other words in the sentence. The following examples show this:

**'What does that mean, Mollie?**

**'He didn't! It isn't true! (28)**

It is observed that the first sentence is an interrogatory questions hence a question mark. The exclamatory statements were made by Mollie when she was accused by Clover of having seen her (Mollie) looking over the hedge that divides animal farm from Foxwood, and that she was being talked to by one of Mr. Pilkington's men allowed the man to stroke her nose. In response and defense, Mollie made the above exclamatory statements as a kind of the accusations. Another instance is as below:

'Quick, quick! He shouted.' Come at once! They are taking Boxer away! They Without waiting for orders (75).

These statements or sentences show strong feelings, surprise, anger and disgust on the part of the animals that saw Boxer being taken away in slaughter van. This means that Boxer was being led and might not return to the farm. The instance of the use of exclamatory sentences in the text, can be termed both dramatic or dialogue, because questions were asked in the process.

Another excerpt: And the animals heard, from the direction of the farm ... the solemn booming of a gun. 'What is that gun firing for? Said Boxer.' To celebrate our victory! Cried squealer. 'What victory? Said Boxer... what victory, comrade?' (65).

This is a dialogue between Squealer and Boxer in conversation concerning the battle of Windmill, fought by Boxer and other animals. Ironically, Squealer who had been unaccountably absent during the fight came skipping towards them, whisking his tail and beaming with satisfaction and talking about the fight he never participated. Hence Orwell in his style stages the dialogue between Boxer and Squealer. Boxer asked Squealer, 'what victory? This means, it is victory over the fight you never took part in? It suffices to say that there are some other examples in the text.

### Cohesion

Cohesion is another grammatical device employed by Orwell to drive home his points. This study may not be fully syntactically analyzed if a mention is not made about the use of cohesion by George Orwell in *Animal Farm*.

Cohesion is a quality that a text displays in order to form a unified whole. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976).

Cohesion occurs where the INTERPRETATION of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one PRESUPPOSES the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it (emphasis theirs) (9).

Halliday and Hasan's treatment of the concept is comprehensive in their monumental book cohesion in English (1976). Cohesion is a property that refers to the logical order of elements within the sentence. Failure to arrange the components of elements of a sentence in logical order results in lack of coherence, and therefore, lack of clarity. According to Leech and Short (1981), Cohesion is:

An important part of what makes a text, both in literary and non-literary writing, but it is not always an important aspect of literary style.

In literary fiction it can most often be seen as a background to more significant style markers, just as the framework which makes a building hang together part of its architecture (style in fiction, 245).

Cohesion occurs in some two ways in the grammar of the novel. Let us examine how it occurred in two ways in the novel:

#### **Cohesion through Normal syntactical Order**

Here, the sentence adheres to the normal syntactic order of subject, predicate, complement and adverbial (SPCA) even though inversions are possible. Orwell uses simple sentences that have the SPCA syntactic order generously. Examples below:

- 1) The hens perched themselves on the Windmill (1) → SPCA
- 2) The pigeons fluted up the rafters (2) → SPA
- 3) The earth was like iron ... (29) → SPA
- 4) They worked diligently ... → SPA

The use of the normal cohesion SPCA shows that the author is interested in revealing facts in clear, concrete details. The patterns explained in clear and simple diction the events in the narration in sequential occurrence.

**Orwell in addition uses cohesion through links.**

#### **Cohesion through Links**

A text is bound together through the help of linking words to ensure unity of the element of the sentence. Orwell also employed coordinator conjunction And time adverbial links to make text a single whole.

- 5) The four young pigs who had protested when Napoleon abolished the meetings.
- 6) A white strip down his nose gave him a somewhat stupid appearance, and in fact he wasn't of first-rate intelligence, but he was universally respected for his steadiness of character and tremendous power of work (2).
- 7) The earth was like iron, and nothing could be done on the field.

The abundance use of the underlined linking words gives us the stylistic value of linkage, which makes the text a "logically articulated discourse". This pattern, once again shows how one event links to another in a holistic rendition, thereby creating linguistic unity in the discourse.

This study will not be complete if a mention is not made to the choice of yet another syntactic word by Orwell to drive home his write-up for meaningful comprehension of the text *Animal Farm*. This is as can be seen as follows, the use of reference.

#### **Reference**

Reference refers to the logical ordering of ideas through sentential references and pronouns. It is pertinent to examine how Orwell utilized this in *Animal Farm*.

At the beginning of chapter one of the text, Orwell introduced Mr. Jones of the Minor Farm. Mrs. Jones ended the short introductory paragraph. He (Orwell) immediately introduces us to Old Major. In the second sentence of the second

paragraph, Orwell devised the use of the personal existential reference 'he' which functioned eleven times from page one to page two under chapter one as anaphoric reference to Old Major. Still in chapter one, in the second paragraph of page three, Orwell introduced another device with the use of "I" which functioned fifteen times to refer anaphorically to Major.

As the chapter progresses to page four, Orwell reversed to the use of 'man' in reference to human beings. 'Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. (4) Again, Orwell immediately reversed back to the use of pronoun 'he' to refer to 'man' in the existential 'he.' This appeared seven times on page four under chapter one. 'Himself' refers back to man and function once respectively as anaphoric pronoun 'I' refers back to Old Major, functions seventeen times from page five through page six under the same chapter one. In the same pages, Orwell interchangeably uses 'man' and Old Major up to pages six and seven. Orwell mentioned Old Major lastly on page seven of the text with the singing of 'Clementine' and 'Cucuracha' on page seven.

It may interest us to know that even the composition of 'Clementine' and 'La Cucuracha' by Old Major dwelt more on joyful tidings of the golden future time and that they tyrant man shall be overthrown while the fruit fields of England shall trod by beasts alone. Rings shall vanish from their noses; the harness from their back, bit and spur shall rust forever, cruel whips no more shall crack, and so on. (7). The whole tracks of the song by Major are quite meaningful. They are sign of prospects that shall be enjoyed by the animals when man shall have been completely overthrown. Orwell titled the song as 'Beast of England'. At the end of the last verse of the songs, Orwell made use of Major and immediately reversed back to the use of 'they' to refer to the animals as '... they had begun singing it for themselves' (8).

Here, Orwell uses the indefinite pronouns, 'they' and 'themselves'. He (Orwell) used the indefinite pronoun, 'they' seven times before the end of the last paragraph on page eight under chapter one, while themselves was used twice as an indefinite pronoun before the end of the last paragraph still on chapter one. Just as Orwell started chapter one using Mr. Jones as an introductory paragraph, so he concluded the last paragraph, on page eight under chapter one using Mr. Jones he reverses back to the use of the personal pronoun 'he' referring back to Mr. Jones. It is most interesting to note that Orwell also used an indefinite pronoun 'Everyone' at the second to the very last sentence (8). Example: Everyone fled to his own sleeping place (8).

There is no doubt that there are lots other referential elements in the text. But, for time limit, we have to restrict ourselves to the above mentioned meanwhile. Other intending researchers could decide to dwell more on it.

#### **Conclusion**

It is clear that some of the syntactic structure such as the simple sentence, compound, and complex sentences as well as cohesive reference contribute to the elucidation of the message and understanding of the text.

#### **Acknowledgement**

I wish to give my special thanks, glory and honour to God Almighty for His continuous blessings, protection, and guidance and for granting me the opportunity and ability to embark on this study without a hitch.

My immense thanks and appreciation also go to my very dear husband for his moral and financial support throughout the period on this research.

My special thanks to Mr. Isieza Elisha who typeset the manuscript with diligence.

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