

“YOU ARE WHAT YOU THINK” BOOK: TEXT ANALYSIS

Ghadah Al Murshidi
Faculty of Education,
Curriculum and Instruction Department
UAE University
E-mail: g_almurshidi@uaeu.ac.ae

ABSTRACT

In this paper, the researcher analyzed the “You Are What You Think” book. The book includes dealing with personal attitude and touches base with the people belief system. From the book title, it seems that the purpose of the book is motivating people to adapt positive attitudes. However, after analysis, the book is related to religious beliefs. Text analysis was used. Some structures were used (e.g., using the opposition, simple present verbs then, the simple future verbs, the subjective personal pronoun, the adjectives, etc.) to maintain its claimed purpose.

Keywords: Text Analysis, motivational book, grammatical points, opposition, present and future verbs, etc.

Introduction

The author started his book with a statement that ‘Almost everything we enjoy today was impossible yesterday “which indicates his belief. In criticizing his statement, The things which are available today might not be discovered and invented yet in a period of time in the past ,so that does not maintain the impossibility of these things in the past. So, the impossibility is restricted by a period of time. Then, he used a speech act (question) not for eliciting the answer but to argue the reader that the process of transforming the impossibility to possibility needs time and surely at the end it will happen and even it will transfer to a fact which everybody believe in ,so he makes the people start thinking of his belief. He tries to persuade the unconfident people with his belief that nothing is impossible if they follow the God. He gives them some advice sequences them as chapters with relevant titles.

The author plays a role of a doctor who diagnoses the patients’ condition. He is the expert; he knows and identifies the disease which is the impossible thought inside the people’s mind and head, it is part of what people think and feel. It seems that this disease widely spreads among many people. Imagining a real conversation, the author points by his finger to the patient’s head and emphasizes that the problem is “deep inside you” by fronting the adverbs. He uses the verb “live” instead of “stay” to emphasize that this disease grows inside the patient, doesn’t remain or sojourn. As a conclusion, the people should change their thoughts and beliefs about impossibility to cure themselves form that disease. It is totally their responsibility. After that, he maintained that the impossible dream which everybody want very much and seems unlikely to happen soon, will become possible and true. That means the patients will be cured from their disease which is inside their mind, but he did not mention when exactly the cure will happen because of the absence of the time marker and the existence the fragment. The longing dream will be achievable by God’s support because he is powerful and can do anything even more than our imagination or desire. The author’s choice of the word “residing” indicates that people have to believe in God, and do their mission which they born with. Using the noun “barrage” and listing these good and bad things which the life has, shows that this is the nature of the life and those things poison the people thoughts with the idea of impossibility and difficulty which after years and years become beliefs.

The author strong’ belief in God directed him to write this book giving some advice to people who don’ believe that nothing is impossible with God, and do not trust their abilities. The author personifies his God and wants to introduce him and his view of the life to those people. He mentioned three general situations using the adverb “when” and God’s ability and longing to turn mistake, worry and confusion into possibility, freedom and clear path. It seems that if those people try to accept God’s offers, they will not lose anything .The author concluded his introduction with a truth that is with God nothing is impossible which some people might not believe in.

Safety Last!

The first advice which the author gives to the unconfident people is taking risk to be successful in life like a leader, lion and hero using three quotations which describe their characteristics. The author started by the necessity in describing the requirements of being a leader using the model auxiliary “must “ , then he used the comparative adjective” better “ in being a lion than a sheep , and finally he used the negative adverb “ never” to indicate that calculation does not make a hero. It is like a continuum which began with obligatory, giving choice then warning.

Using the opposition such as “safety, risk”, “last, first”, “things, nothing”, “live , die” ,“lion, sheep” and “win , lose” makes the people compare two sides of an idea and look at the negative side to avoid then, they will be encouraged to admire the positive side unconsciously.

When the author uses the action verbs in the conditional dependent clause, he uses some model auxiliaries in the dependent clause which indicates the ability or results in the future. While, he uses some obligatory model verbs in the independent clause to give them commands which indicates the necessity of the quick action after giving the people the choice according to their desire of achieving the success. The author uses the conditional hypothetical” if” to show the people the unfavorable expected results of avoiding taking risks which will be not accomplishing the success. Using the action verbs after and more than stative verbs in the dependent clauses of the conditional sentences indicates the people’s responsibility to take action if they have the desire to achieve success (see Appendix A). Moreover, the author used the adjective “successful” twice. In the first paragraph, he used the conditional sentence and used “must” in the independent clause to give the people the qualities of the successful people and let the choice for them. He uses some words from the nature such as “water and storm” to refer to the risk while, he uses “sunshine and rainbow” to indicate the success as opposition situation.

The author uses a lot of simple present verbs then, the simple future verbs to encourage the people to live the current moment, forget the past with its negative thoughts. They have to start changing their way of thinking to be more positive and taking risks to succeed.

The author talks with the unconfident people using the subjective personal pronoun” you “to indicate their responsibility to take action and achieve success by changing their thoughts and beliefs. He uses the reflexive pronoun” your” many times to encourage the people to start doing because if they do not start doing, no one will do for them. He maintains that if the people do not try to change their thoughts about the impossibility, and take risk, their negative thoughts will not be changed, nothing will be changed around them, and they will not achieve anything.

Using the word “ risk” fourteen times , and using the word “chance” nine times in the “ Safety last” chapter emphasizes the author’s strong belief which is taking risks and chances will lead the people to success.

The author’s usage of the present perfect in the first sentence makes him like the expert of peoples’ life and events which have happened from the past until now. Using the conjunction “but” indicates that the independent clause is negative which emphasizes that the dependent clause is true. It encourages the people to be leaders not only like any normal person.

The author mentions the characteristic of the safest road to hell to encourage the people to take risk and work hard to accomplish success. He encourages taking little chances “slim” which are better than doing nothing. Also, the author has a negative idea of the cautiousness because he thinks it prevents the people from taking risks and achieving success, while he encourages the boldness. Some people might argue against his conception of avoiding cautiousness and taking risks most the time and not follow his beliefs.

If God is your father, please call home

The author's belief in God's support which brings the success by converting the impossibility to possibility motivates him to encourage the people to follow God and be closer to him. In this chapter ,he mostly uses the present and future tense of the verb , and he tries to balance between using the verbs which refer to the peoples' duties (*make , get , pray , tell , thank , do , spend , believe , position , take , requires , lives , says and, begin*) and the verbs which refer to the peoples' benefits (*brings , lifts , gives , provides , generate , experience , get back , receive , link , have and change*).

The author uses the negation, the conjunction "so" and the adverb "instead" to encourage the people to pray which will make them closer to God to solve their difficulties. (See appendix B).

The author starts his chapter by mentioning the benefits of being closer to God using some nouns such as "momentum, victory, hope, poise, peace and energy" which everybody wants to have. He tries to encourage the people to follow and believe in God. Additionally, the author mentions the noun "heaven" to emphasize that the people will not lose anything if they do the prayers to God because these prayers will lead them to heaven after death, so the benefits will continue after their death. However, some people do not believe in the existence of the heaven and life after death; therefore; this encouragement may not persuade them to believe in God.

Using the adjectives "powerful and wonderful" as description of the energy and peace which God will provide if the people follow him, encourages them to believe in him. Using the adverb "most" which forms the superlative before the adjective "powerful" indicates that his God is the most powerful and no one can put him in a comparison position with other Gods; therefore, believing in him will inspire the believers with that energy. Using the adverbs "far and more" before the adjective "wonderful" as a description of God's peace , the peoples' curiosity will make them long to experience and reach that far more wonderful peace which will beautify the soul. On the other hand, using the superlative adjective "strongest" emphasizes the powerful result of asking God for help, which does not need a lot of effort, encourages the people to follow God because they will not lose anything (See appendix C).

The author mentions the noun "God" eleven times in the chapter. He uses the imperative form of the verbs "tell, begin and ask" with the noun "God" which expresses his belief that God is existed and powerful so, he could provide help anytime , while some people might argue the issue of the God existence. The author mentions the noun "devil" who is considered as an enemy and the tempter of humankind, only once as a warning from his intentional negative moral acts or cruel thoughts.

References:

1. Stoop, D. (2003). *You are what you think*. 1st ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: F.H. Revell.

Appendix A:

Stative verbs
If you want to be successful, you <i>must</i> either have a chance or take one.
If you dare for nothing, you <i>need</i> hope for nothing.

Action verbs
If you never take risks, you <i>will</i> never accomplish great things.
If you do not risk anything, you risk even more.
You <i>cannot</i> get your head above the <u>water</u> , if you never stick your neck out
If you spend your whole life inside waiting for the <u>storm</u> , you <i>will</i> never enjoy the sunshine.

Appendix B:

<i>Don't worry</i> about anything; instead , pray about every thin g; tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for his answers.
Common people don't pray, they only beg. So pray, <i>don't beg</i> .

Appendix C:

The most <i>powerful</i> energy anyone can generate is prayer energy.
If you do this , you will experience God's peace , which is far more <i>wonderful</i> than the human mind can understand
The <i>strongest</i> action that you can take in any situation is to go to your knees and ask God for help.