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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## Surface and Deep Structures in Desiderata by Max Ehrmann

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### ABSTRACT

This textual investigation assumes that the select sentences excerpted from Desiderata by Max Ehrmann reveal surface and deep structures in linearity. The method used in this study is a structural analysis and description of constituents. The structural analysis involves the immediate constituents and the semantic components of the sentences. The description of constituents involves the transformation of sentences according to the case. The study shows that sentence 1 is a compound sentence made up of verb, adverb, preposition, article, noun, conjunction, article, noun, conjunction, verb, relative pronoun, noun, expletive pronoun, modal auxiliary, main verb, preposition, and noun; sentence 2 is a simple sentence made up of adverb, adjective, adverb, adjective, preposition, noun, verb, preposition, adjective, noun, preposition, adjective, and noun; sentence 3 is a compound sentence made up of verb, pronoun, noun, adverb, conjunction, adverb, conjunction, verb, preposition, and noun; sentence 4 is a compound sentence made up of verb, adjective, conjunction, adjective, noun, pronoun, verb, noun, preposition, article, and noun; and sentence 5 is a compound-complex sentence made up of conjunction, pronoun, verb, pronoun, preposition, noun, pronoun, modal auxiliary, verb, adjective, conjunction, adjective, noun, conjunction, and pronoun. The functions revealed in the five sentences are to offer a piece of advice with the notion of telling someone what to do and to express a situation in which the outcome is likely to happen in the future with the notion of telling someone that under a certain condition a specific result will likely to happen in the future. The sentences transform with nominative, possessive, and objective focuses. Based on the findings, it has been concluded that the five select sentences excerpted from Desiderata by Max Ehrmann reveal surface and deep structure in linearity. Recommendations include future research topics that may be investigated by English language researchers and the significance of teaching students of English as a second language surface and deep structure analyses to provide them with samples of how sentences are crafted following the linearity of constituents that express intended meanings, and of how sentences are transformed with different cases.

### KEYWORDS

Surface and deep structures, Desiderata, structural analysis, description of constituents

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Rationale

The structure of the sentence must be mastered by the speaker of the second language speaker of English, so that the learner would be able to construct sentences accurately following the linearity of the constituent.

The sentence is the starting point of learning English. Sentence construction is necessary for understanding and making things clear. Hence, learners should have knowledge of the sentence to learn English Grammar. This study which focuses on the deep and surface structure of a sentence, is practically needed in the classroom and linguistic scholarly work.

Deep structure and surface structure are concepts used in linguistics, specifically in the study of syntax in the Chomskyan tradition of transformational generative grammar. The deep structure of a linguistic expression is a theoretical construct that seeks to unify several related structures. Chomsky coined and popularized the terms "deep structure" and "surface structure" in the early 1960s.

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American linguist Sydney Lamb wrote in 1975 that Chomsky "probably borrowed the term from Hockett". American linguist Charles Hockett first used the dichotomous pair "deep grammar" vs. "surface grammar" in his 1958 book titled *A Course in Modern Linguistics*. Chomsky first referred to these Hockettian concepts in his 1962 paper, *The Logical Basis of Linguistic Theory*, which was later published as *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory* in 1964.

Chomsky noted in his early years that by dividing deep structures from surface structures, one could understand "slip of the tongue" moments, where someone says something that he did not intend, as instances where deep structures do not translate into the intended surface structure. The concept of deep structure favoured by Chomsky is that a sentence more closely corresponds to a deep structure paired with the surface structure derived from it, with an additional phonetic form obtained from the processing of the surface structure.

Thus, there is a need to do a model analysis of the surface and deep structure to give our learners of samples of how sentences are crafted.

### **1.2 Theoretical Background of the Study**

This study, which analyses the surface and deep structure of the five select sentences excerpted from "Desiderata" by Max Ehrmann, assumed that the select sentences revealed surface and deep structure in linearity. This assumption was supported by the theories of Linear Grammar and Semantic-Based Grammar.

Linear Grammar (LG) is a practical framework for linguistic analysis influenced by three traditions in linguistic theory: Categorical Grammar (CG), a kind of syntactic analysis founded by Joachim Lambek (late 1950s) that treats lexical entries and grammar rules, respectively, as axioms and inference rules of a proof theory; Montague semantics, founded by Richard Montague (late 1960s) influenced by earlier philosophical logicians Frege (1892), Carnap (1947), and Kripke (1963), which uses type theory (Church 1940, Henkin 1950) to analyze sentence meanings; and, Dynamic Semantics, founded by Kamp (DRT, 1981), Heim (FCS, 1982), and others based on philosophical ideas of Stalnaker and Lewis (1960s and 1970s) about the role of context in the interpretation of multi-sentence discourses (Pollard, 2012).

I.C. Analysis is a method of sentence analysis that was first mentioned by Leonard Bloomfield and developed further by Rulon Wells. I.C. Analysis is an implicit assumption that linguistic structures, especially syntactic structures, are layered structures amenable to analysis by progressive dichotomous cutting. In other words, I.C. Analysis is a system of grammatical analysis that break up sentences into sequential layers or constituents until in the final layer, and every constituent consists of only a word or meaningful part of a word. The initial emphasis was upon pure segmentation, simply breakup the sentence into its constituent parts without, at first, knowing what these parts were: Generally, the section is binary except in some cases where section into three or more points is allowed. The proponents of IC analysis also emphasized that the ultimate constituents of a sentence are morphemes and not words. Hockett (1958), "morphemes rather than words are the elementary building blocks of language in its grammatical aspect" (Abdulkhkim et al., 2015).

Semantic-Based Grammar focuses on the meaning or semantic structure, or message of sentences. Thus, this model linguistic description is also called "case grammar" since it attempts to relate the underlying "notion" or "case categories" to the surface structure ("function") or syntax of the sentence (Smolinski 62, in Pesirla n.d.). Since meaning can generate different sentences in a certain "notion", this model of linguistic description is also called transformational r generative grammar (Labov 49 in Pesirla, n.d.). In semantic-based/case/transformational/generative grammar, a sentence can be transformed into several variedly constructed sentences having a common message/ meaning with the original sentence. Hence, meaning is their common denominator using different syntactic structures with different case focuses. In semantic-based grammar analysis, two structural dimensions of the sentence are dissected: (1) the surface structure (syntax) and (2) the deep structure (semantics), which is segmented as (a) function (speech act) and (b) notion (concept/idea).

Thus, a semantic-based/transformational grammar analysis takes the following steps: (1) immediate constituents identified (surface structure); (2) function identified (speech act); (3) notion identified (idea expressed); (4) sentence transforms constructed (using several syntactic structures of the same meaning) ( Pesirla, n.d.).

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

This study analyses the surface and the deep structure of the five select sentences excerpted from *Desiderata* by Max Ehrmann.

Specifically, it answers the following sub-problems:

1. How do the immediate constituents construct the surface structure of the sentences?

2. What functions do the sentences reveal?
3. What notions are revealed by the sentences?
4. How is the sentence transforms constructed?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study will provide valuable knowledge of the surface and deep structures of the five select sentences excerpted from the poem *Desiderata*. More specifically, it is beneficial for the following:

**Language teachers of English.** This study will give them insights into the relevance of surface structure and deep structure analyses in poetry which can be an interesting way of teaching English language learners to construct sentences accurately following the linearity of the constituent.

**Students of English as a second language.** This research study will provide a model analysis of the surface and deep structure to give our learners of samples of how sentences are crafted.

**The researchers of the English language.** This study will offer a valuable contribution to linguistic scholarly work as it provides information on the surface structure and deep structure analyses in poetry.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Linguistic Research Method**

The method used in this study is a structural analysis and description of constituents. The structural analysis involves the immediate constituents and the semantic components of the sentences. The description of constituents involves the transformation of sentences according to the case.

### **2.2 Sources of Data**

The main source of data is the selection entitled *Desiderata* by Max Ehrmann, where the five select model sentences are excerpted.

### **2.3 The Data-Generating Process**

The procedure for generating the structural analytical data follows four phases:

Immediate Constituent Analysis: Phase 1. The immediate constituents of the five sentences are identified through successive segmentation analyses of each of the sentences

Functions or Speech Acts: Phase 2. The function, and speech act, of each of the sentences are identified.

Notions or Ideas Expressed: Phase 3. The notion or idea expressed in each sentence is identified.

Sentence Transforms: Phase 4. Sentence transforms with the same meaning of the five sentences are constructed with nominative, possessive, and objective focuses.

## **3. Results/Findings**

### **3.1 Results and Discussion**

The analytical data derived from the linguistic analysis of the select five sentences excerpted from *Desiderata* by Max Ehrmann follows the following sequence as outlined below.

*I. Sentence One:*

Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

- A. ICA: V+Adv+Prep+Art+N+Conj+Art+N+Conj+V+RelPron+N+ExPron+ModalAux+V+Prep+N
- B. Function: to offer an advice
- C. Notion: telling someone what to do
- D. Sentence Transforms:
  - Nominative Focus:  
Silence brings you peace as you go placidly amid the noise and the haste.
  - Possessive focus:  
Your silence as you go placidly amid the noise and the haste may give you peace.
  - Objective Focus  
Peace may be found by you in silence as you placidly go amid the noise and the haste.

*II. Sentence Two:*

As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

- A. ICA: Adv+Adj+Adv+Adj+Prep+N+V+Prep+Adj+N+Prep+Adj+N
- B. Function: to offer an advice
- C. Notion: telling someone what to do
- D. Sentence Transform:

Nominative Focus:

You have to be always on good terms with all persons.

Possessive Focus:

Your relationship with all persons has to be always in good terms, as far as possible.

Objective Focus:

Being on good terms with all persons must be always observed by you.

*III. Sentence Three:*

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.

- A. ICA: V+Pron+N+Adv+Conj+Adv+Conj+V+Prep+N
- B. Function: to offer an advice
- C. Notion: telling someone what to do
- D. Sentence Transform:

Nominative Focus:

You speak your truth quietly and clearly, and you listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant, for they too have their story.

Possessive Focus

The story of other people, even the dull and the ignorant, deserves your attention as you also quietly and clearly share yours with them.

Objective Focus:

Your ideas should be quietly and clearly expressed, and others, even the dull and the ignorant who too have their story, should be listened to.

*IV. Sentence Four:*

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit.

- A. ICA: V+Adj+Conj+Adj+N+Pron+V+N+Prep+Art+N
- B. Function: to offer an advice
- C. Notion: telling someone what to do
- D. Sentence Transforms:

Nominative Focus:

You avoid loud and aggressive persons, for they vex the spirit.

Possessive Focus

Loud and aggressive persons' vexations are not good to your spirit.

Objective Focus

Loud and aggressive persons, who are vexations to the spirit, must be avoided by you.

*V. Sentence Five:*

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

- A. ICA:  
Conj+Pron+V+Pron+Prep+N+Pron+ModalAux+verb+Adj+Conj+Adj+Conj+Adv+Pron+ModalAux+V+Adj+C  
onj+Adj+N+Conj+Pron
- B. Function: to express the situation in which the outcome is likely to happen in the future
- C. Notion: telling someone that under a certain condition, a specific result will likely happen in the future
- D. Sentence Transforms:

Nominative Focus:

You may become vain or bitter if you compare yourself with others, for there will always be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Possessive Focus:

Your comparison of yourself with others may make you become vain or bitter, for always there will be a greater and lesser person than yourself.

Objective Focus:

Comparing yourself with others should be avoided by you because it may make you vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

### **3.2 Findings**

The following findings are hereby summarized:

1. The immediate constituents that construct the surface structures of the sentences are as follows: sentence 1 is a compound sentence made up of verb, adverb, preposition, article, noun, conjunction, article, noun, conjunction, verb, relative pronoun, noun, expletive pronoun, modal auxiliary, main verb, preposition and noun; sentence 2 is a simple sentence made up of adverb, adjective, adverb, adjective, preposition, noun, verb, preposition, adjective, noun, preposition, adjective, and noun; sentence 3 is a compound sentence made up of verb, pronoun, noun, adverb, conjunction, adverb, conjunction, verb, preposition, and noun; sentence 4 is a compound sentence made up of verb, adjective, conjunction, adjective, noun, pronoun, verb, noun, preposition, article, and noun; and sentence 5 is a compound-complex sentence made up of conjunction, pronoun, verb, pronoun, preposition, noun, pronoun, modal auxiliary, verb, adjective, conjunction, adjective, conjunction, adverb, pronoun, modal auxiliary, verb, adjective, conjunction, adjective, noun, conjunction, and pronoun.
2. The five sentences reveal the following functions: to offer advice; and to express a situation in which the outcome is likely to happen in the future.
3. The five sentences reveal the following notions: telling someone what to do and telling someone that under a certain condition, a specific result will likely happen in the future.
4. The five sentences construct five sentence transforms with nominative focus, five sentence transforms with possessive focus, and five sentence transforms with objective focus.

### **4. Conclusion**

This study aimed to analyze the surface and deep structures of the five select sentences excerpted from *Desiderata* by Max Ehrman by specifically determining how the immediate constituents construct the surface structure of the sentences, what functions do the sentences reveal, what notions are revealed by the sentences, and how the sentence transforms are constructed, found out that the sentences reveal surface and deep structures in linearity.

Sentence no. 1 is a compound sentence composed of the immediate constituents, which are verb, adverb, preposition, article, noun, conjunction, article, noun, conjunction, verb, relative pronoun, noun, expletive pronoun, modal auxiliary, main verb, preposition, and noun. The function is to offer advice with the notion of telling someone what to do. The sentence transforms with nominative, possessive, and objective focuses. Sentence no. 2 is a simple sentence made up of the immediate constituents, which are adverb, adjective, adverb, adjective, preposition, noun, verb, preposition, adjective, noun, preposition, adjective, and noun. The function is to offer advice with the notion of telling someone what to do. The sentence transforms with nominative, possessive, and objective focuses. Sentence no. 3 is a compound sentence composed of the immediate constituents, which are verb, pronoun, noun, adverb, conjunction, adverb, conjunction, verb, preposition, and noun. The function is to offer advice with the notion of telling someone what to do. The sentence transforms with nominative possessive and objective focuses. Sentence no. 4 is a compound sentence composed of the immediate constituents, which are verb, adjective, conjunction, adjective, noun, pronoun, verb, noun, preposition, article, and noun. The function is to offer advice with the notion of telling someone what to do. The sentence transforms with nominative, possessive, and objective focuses. Sentence no. 5 is a compound-complex sentence composed of the immediate constituents, which are conjunction, pronoun, verb, pronoun, preposition, noun, pronoun, modal auxiliary, verb, adjective, conjunction, adjective, conjunction, adverb, pronoun, modal auxiliary, verb, adjective, conjunction, adjective, noun, conjunction, and pronoun. The function is to express a situation in which the outcome is likely to happen in the future with the notion of telling someone that under a certain condition, a specific result will likely happen in the future. The sentence transforms with nominative, possessive, and objective focuses.

This study, however, has potential limitations. The main source of data is only limited to the poem *Desiderata* from which the five select sentences are excerpted. Hence, the following topics are recommended for future research: 1) Linguistic structure analysis in short stories; 2) sentence craft in forms, functions, and notions in news articles; 3) linguistic structures in songs; 4) linearity in forms and meanings in speeches; 5) linguistic, structural analysis in dyadic interactions.

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