
Metaphoric Usage of Adjectives in Emily Dickinson's Poems

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Abstract

This paper is an endeavor to tackle the metaphoric usage of adjectives used in selected poems of the American poet Emily Dickinson. Dickinson was excogitated in formulating metaphoric adjectives that modify certain nouns which evoke implicit meanings. Noticeably, she adopted an adjective + noun syntactic pattern where the adjective does not collocate with the noun following it from semantic aspect. The poet fabricated its metaphoric adjective on the ground that adjective is not compatible with the noun. However, this research aims at sorting out the metaphoric adjectives and analyzing their intended meanings. As its second objective concentrates on how the poet juxtaposes an adjective with a noun to create an effective rhetorical image. The metaphoric use of adjectives brings about semantic changes in the primary meaning of the adjective. The procedure of analysis depends on deconstructing the phrase into adjective and noun in order to decode the implicit meanings communicated through adjectives by the Interaction Theory of Metaphor. The process of analysis relies on selecting (') poems randomly which helps us providing the readers with reasonable interpretations. Deductively, it has been proved that Dickinson recruited emotive and sentimental adjectives in her poems to personify non-human objects either negatively or positively, which enabled her to produce exquisite metaphoric images which are rhetorically unique.

Keywords: Interaction Theory, Dickinson, Metaphor, Adjectives, Frame, and Focus.

الاستعمال المَجَازِيّ للصفات في قَصَائِدِ إيميلي ديكنسون

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الخلاصة

يُعد البحث محاولة لتناول الاستعمال المَجَازِيّ للصفات في قَصَائِدِ مختارة للشاعرة الأمريكية إيميلي ديكنسون. فقد أبدعت ديكنسون في تكوين صفات مَجَازِيّة والتي تَوَصَّف الأسماء التي تتبَعها، حيث تكْمُن في طياتها مَعَانِي ضمنيةّة. لُوْحِظَ تَبْنِيهَا التَّرْكِيبِيَّةُ النُّحْوِيَّةُ (صُفَّة + اسم) ، بحيث أن الصِّفَّةُ لا تقترن دلاليّاً مع الاسم الذي يليها. إعتَمَدَتِ الشاعرة في تَشْكِيلِ الصِّفَّةِ المَجَازِيَّةِ على أساس عدم توافقها دلاليّاً مع الاسم. يَهْدُفُ هذا البَحْثُ لتَحْدِيدِ الصِّفَاتِ التي اسْتَعْمَلَتَ مجازياً ثم تَحْلِيلِ مَعَانِيهَا المقصودة. فِيمَا يركز الهدف الثاني على كيفية اسْتِعْمَالِ الشاعرة الصِّفَّةُ مع الاسم بُعْيَةً رسم صور بلاغية مؤثرة. إن اسْتِعْمَالِ الصِّفَّةُ بشكل مَجَازِيّ يفضي إلى تَغْيِيرِ مَعْنَاهِ الأساسي. يَنْتَصِرُ التَحْلِيلُ على تَفْكِيكِ التَّعْبِيرِ المَجَازِيّ إلى صُفَّةٍ و اسم لإدراك المعاني الضمنية المكونة في الصفات من خلال تطبيق نظريّة التكامَلِ المَجَازِيّ. تستند عملية التَحْلِيلِ على إختيار (10) قصائد أُخْتِيرَتِ عشوائياً و التي تُسَاعِدُنَا في رَفْدِ القُرَاءِ بِتَحْلِيلِ مُنْطِقِيّ. لقد بَرَهَنَ بأن ديكنسون وَظَّفَتِ صفات ذات مَعْنَى عاطِفِيّ و إدْرَاقِيّ في قَصَائِدِهَا لتَشْخِيسِ أَشْيَاءٍ من غير البَشَرِ إما بشكل سلبيّ أو إيجابيّ والتي مكنتها لتكوّن صور مَجَازِيَّةٍ بَدِيعَةٍ و فَرِيدَةٍ من نوعها بلاغياً.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نظرية التكامَلِ، ديكنسون، المَجَازِ، الصفات، الاطار، المحور

1. Introduction

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson was born in December 1830 and died in May 1886 in Amherst, Massachusetts in America. She has been described as singular, enigmatic, but she was considered by other critics and scholars as unusual of her poetic style (Wendy, 2002). She was considered as one of the founders of American poetry. She is known to use simple stanzas and metrical forms, whose grammatical structures are concise yet expressive. As she adopts compacted metaphor, neologisms, and highly condensed style (Pollak, 2004). Linguistically, her syntactic structures and grammatical forms unique and idiosyncratic, and metaphor played an important role in shaping her poetic lines and imparted her notions and themes which proved that Dickinson had profound thinking and imagination (Helen, 2004). Dickinson recruited different figures of speech including metaphor where she conveyed certain ideas like nature, death, immortality and re-birth. Lexically, she used words to convey different senses, as she was skillful in violating the collocability of words that represent the lexical legitimacy of words to occur together to give clear and perceivable expressions. She was able to juxtapose and group words together which are incompatible in order to create metaphoric images. Dickinson's incongruous juxtaposition was incorporated in adjective + noun template which is not easy for the readers to grasp its implicit meaning and apprehend the notion being conveyed by the poet. Ali and Ayyed (2021) point out that Dickinson's poetry has some distinguished features, such as using very succinct words, elliptical words, ambiguous words, and different figures of speech like metaphor, simile and personification. Poetically, she communicates different themes, but focuses on death, nature, immortality, and human's agonies. She plays with words as noted in using adjectives with their literal senses or metaphoric senses, in this way she lets the readers grasp the meaning of the metaphoric adjective, such as the adjective 'greedy' in the line 'greedy wave' where the adjective here means huge or great in size not rapacious or gluttonous. This paper attempts to answer the research question: What are the adjectives that Emily Dickinson used metaphorically? Answering this question, it becomes easy for the readers to distinguish between the metaphoric adjectives and ordinary adjectives that bear the literal meanings, which are hired or coined by Dickinson in all her poems.

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2. Literature Review: Theoretical Framework

2.1. Adjectives from Syntactic and Morphological Perspectives

Adjective is defined by Crystal (2008) as a set of words that specify the nouns. They give additional information about nouns. They function as modifiers for these nouns. Adjectives perform certain syntactic functions and they occur either as modifiers of nouns. Modification resulting from adjectives can be a premodifier, which means the adjective that precedes the noun, whereas the postmodifier means the adjective which is placed after a noun (Asp and Villiers, 2010). Greenbaum and Nelson (2002) categorize adjectives into three types according to their structural functions. The first class is the premodification of a noun, the second class is the subject complement, while the third one is the object complement where the adjective follows the noun that functions as an object of the sentence. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) classify adjectives into attributive adjectives and predicative adjectives. The attributive adjectives precede the nouns directly, while the predicative adjectives follow the nouns which are placed in different positions. For example, Emily Dickinson used the adjective 'dull' attributively and predicatively in her poems. Thus, the line 'dull hearts have died' contains the adjective 'dull' which preceded the noun 'hearts', which occupied the attributive position, meanwhile she used the same adjective predicatively after the noun as seen in the line 'Tell which-it's dull to guess' where 'dull' occupied the predicative position.

Adjectives such as 'soft', 'sharp', 'dry', 'cold', 'deep', 'bright', and others are called polysemous adjectives because they can be used with nouns of different kinds and their meaning depends on the nouns they modify. People who are professionally interested in language tend to think of such adjectives as either having a number of different unrelated meanings, or as having one basic meaning, called 'literal meaning'. They consider all other meanings of these adjectives as metaphorical, that is derived from the literal meaning and thus related to it (Rakova, 2003). McNally and Kennedy (2008) presents the term idiomatic adjective which they view as the adjective that modifies the noun attributively whose meaning cannot associate with the noun literally in lieu it is interpreted literally as when one says 'soft heart', he does not mean the heart is elastic or flexible, rather it means emotional or passionate.

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2.2. Interaction Theory of Metaphor

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphor is a process of applying one element from one field to another element in other field. Gibbs (2008) ensures that metaphor plays an important role in corresponding the thought with the language, which means to express metaphor in certain words. Metaphor is a rhetorical device by which one object is expressed in terms of another. It shows the figurative function of expressions in a linguistic context (Wilkinson, 2002). On the other hand, Kövecses (2002) stresses on the idea that metaphor is based on a comparison between two dissimilar things. The reason behind drawing a comparison between two irrelevant things is to communicate a certain theme. Guttenplan (2005) emphasizes the idea that metaphor is basically concerned with meaning and he considers it as a phenomenon of meaning and metaphor should be understood in relation to meaning. So, the key factor of metaphor is meaning which can be deduced from words that frame metaphor. Knowles and Moon (2006) also view metaphor as related to meaning in the sense that they assure that metaphor is a major process in the creation of words and setting out their conventional meanings. Accordingly, they believe that concepts and ideas are expressed through metaphor.

Metaphor is a prominent figure of speech which involves the recognition of correspondences between dissimilar or unrelated objects, such as describing a man as courageous by using the animal 'lion' as in 'Bob is a lion' or describing a man as cunning by using the word 'fox' as in the example 'Harry is a fox'. Thus, someone describes a man in terms of another word from a different field (Semino and Demjén, 2017). The interaction theory is characterized by having two characteristics. The first characteristic is that it manifests the effect of the source domain's implication complex on the target domain. The second one is metaphor cognitively creates a new idea which is not perceived by the literal strings of the word (Berman, 2007). Consequently, the interaction theory concentrates on the commonplaces or associations that can be deduced from the frame; the object which is used to create metaphor.

The interaction theory of metaphor relies heavily on the idea that metaphor has two thoughts of different things, but supported by a single expression or phrase. Their meaning represents the resultant of interacting them together. Black (1962) concentrates on two elements when dealing with metaphor, frame and focus. Frame is the facet of the topic being talked about, whilst focus is

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the implications (associations) of metaphor. For example, the metaphor ‘Jack is a wolf’ consists of the frame ‘Jack’ and focus ‘wolf’. The focus is the important part in any metaphor from interactional point of view because it gives the speaker’s idea or notion. Sternberg (1982) comments on the above metaphor in stating that metaphor sees the man from one field in terms of a wolf in another field. In describing a man as a wolf, the speaker evokes the system of related commonplaces envisaged in the wolf. Likewise, Gibbs (1994) assures that the core of the interaction theory is that both frame and focus (terms) affect the meaning of the other.

3. Research Objectives

To conduct this study appropriately, the following objectives should be achieved:

- 1.To determine the adjectives that are used metaphorically.
2. To grasp the intended meaning of every specified adjective which is used metaphorically.
3. To identify morphologically the adjectives being used metaphorically as source or derived or compound ones.

4. Methods and Materials

4.1. Data Collection Procedures

The process of gathering the corpus is based on certain procedures. The first procedure is to determine the basic source from which the adjectives are taken. The basic source is a published book entitled *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* which was written by Johnson (1960). This book comprises all Dickinson’s poems. The second procedure is to pick out a set of poems among hundreds poems – in this case the researchers will select certain poems having metaphorized adjectives. The third procedure is to stipulate the adjectives that are undergoing metaphorization. Consequently, the researchers basically rely on the above book when they quote the poetic lines that have metaphoric adjectives with mentioning the number of the poem, stanza and the lines’ numbers.

4.2. Technique of Analysis

perform the analytical part of this descriptive research, an appropriate model should be adopted. To analyze adjectives figuratively the Interaction Theory of Metaphor, which was originated by Max Black (1979), has been adopted. This theory basically is based on interacting two elements of metaphor together in order to perceive one major idea hidden behind the metaphor encapsulated in the adjective in question. Black (1979) proposes two components that

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form metaphor, the frame and focus where he believes that frame represents the structure of metaphor, whereas the focus incorporates the real meaning not the literal meaning which is depicted in the frame itself. Black builds up his interactional theory of metaphor through deconstructing the metaphor into two topics; the first one is called the literal topic, while the second topic is the subsidiary topic, which is the most important part in metaphor and it contains a set of associated implications or a system of associated commonplaces which is linked to the primary subject. Conclusively, he assures that the reader depends on the implications mantled in metaphor. Practically, the researchers foster this approach set out by Black and give full interpretation for each metaphor after analyzing it in terms of Back's approach. The researchers design a diagram that illustrates the technique of analyzing a metaphoric expression that involves the structural pattern adjective + noun.

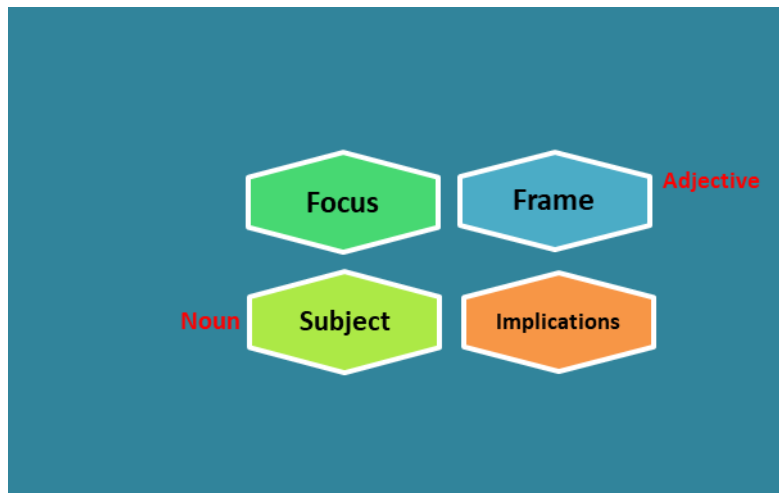


Diagram (1): Technique of Analyzing Metaphoric Adjectives

According to the Interaction Theory of Metaphor innovated by Max Black (1962), metaphor is analyzed according to two major key concepts subject and frame. Researchers adopt these two elements in the process of analysis along with adding the interactive mapping as a third element and contextual interpretation as a fourth element of analysis. Thus, there is a complete and comprehensive approach of analyzing metaphorized adjectives.

4.3. Data Analysis

The approach of analysis depends on decoding metaphor into three parts. The first part is the focus which represents the primary subject of metaphor, while the second part is the frame which stands for the secondary subject. The third part is created by the researcher which is a way to explain the

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implications and meanings that are embraced in the metaphoric expressions. As the fourth part is a practical step of interacting between the two subjects; focus and frame by relying on the context of the poem.

1. All overgrown by **cunning** moss,

All interspersed with weed,

(Poem 148, Stanza 1, P.70)

A. **Focus:** moss

B. **Frame:** cunning

C. **Interactive Mapping:** a deceiving surface

Contextual Interpretation

The adjective ‘cunning’ is used to describe the moss covering the grave of Charlotte Bronte who died who was neglected and even her grave was covered by moss and weed which makes no believes that this is a grave, rather this is a bad mossy place which is forlorn and gloomy. Consequently, the word ‘moss’ has been personified because the adjective ‘cunning’ is associated with man or the animal fox only.

2. By me! But who am I,

To tell the **pretty** secret

Of the Butterfly!

(Poem 173, Page 82)

A. **Focus:** secret

B. **Frame:** pretty

C. **Interactive Mapping:** a wonderful modification of the caterpillar’s shape.

Contextual Interpretation

Secret cannot be described as being pretty or beautiful where this adjective is used to describe concrete things or human beings or animals. However, this profound metaphoric usage of the adjective ‘pretty’ with noun ‘secret’ has mystical implications that proves that Dickinson is quietly admired and fascinated by the modification of the insect from caterpillar into a nice butterfly. She describes this metamorphosis as a pretty secret that relates only to the creator. So, the word adjective ‘pretty’ has a set of commonplaces associated with the noun ‘secret’ – as being described as wonderful, great, astonishing or marvelous.

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3. If at length the **smoldering** anguish
Will not overcome –

(Poem 175, Stanza 4, Page 83)

A. Focus: anguish

B. Frame: smoldering

C. Interactive Mapping: Drawing a comparison between man's anguish and volcano's burst.

Contextual Interpretation

Lexically, the adjective 'smoldering' cannot collocate with the noun 'anguish' or 'pain' instead it requires something like wood or tar or asphalt. Visibly, Dickinson metaphorically borrows the image of the silent mountain that has a volcano and suddenly bursts to flow rocks and desert the village compared to a calm man, who due to life pressures, bursts and his behavior becomes uncontrollable. Both subjects volcano and human have the same mental commonplaces.

4. And the **palpitating** Vineyard

In the dust, be thrown

(Poem 175, Stanza 4, Page 83)

A. Focus: Vineyard

B. Frame: palpitating

C. Interactive Mapping: symbolizing death by dust.

Contextual Interpretation

The derived adjective 'palpitating' demands a human or animal in order to feel of this sense, but here Emily Dickinson fulfills a connection between these two subjects; the focus 'vineyard' and the frame 'palpitating' which share certain implications in that man can die because of palpitating and the plant represented by vineyard can be died or killed by palpitating due to having cold weather or frost or heavy dust or rocks of erected volcanos.

5. I'm the little "Heart's Ease"!

I don't care for **pouting** skies!

(Poem 176, Stanza 1 Page 177)

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- A. Focus:** skies
B. Frame: pouting
C. Interactive Mapping: the is being cloudy and about to rain

Contextual Interpretation

Once more, the poet Emily Dickinson personifies the skies as human being when she used the adjective ‘pouting’ to metaphorically ensure that the weather is not clear today and the clouds are heavy and dark and about to rain which might ruin the poet’s conversation and contemplation with her favorable flower in the garden. Thus, there are commonplaces shared by the pouting skies and pouting human’s face who can ruin any nice situation with their angry emotions.

6. When "Landlords" turn the **drunken** Bee

(Poem 214, Stanza 3 Page 98)

- A. Focus:** bee
B. Frame: drunken
C. Interactive Mapping: both man and bee are intoxicated by nature

Contextual Interpretation

The poet Dickinson has created a vivid image about the bee which is being described as drunken, which is lined up with the Dickinson’ usage of personification when she personified the insect ‘bee’ as being drunken and the participial adjective ‘drunken’ is used to describe a human being who drinks alcohol only. However, this manifests that the human being is intoxicated by the beverage when he drinks it and Dickinson has borrowed this state to say that also the bee is intoxicated by the beauty of nature that has many types of flowers that keeps it get the honey permanently throughout sucking it from the flowers’ nectar.

7. Whose Emerald Nest – the Ages spin – Of mellow – **murmuring** Thread – (Poem 161, Stanza1, Page 162)

- A. Focus:** thread

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B. Frame: mellow – murmuring

C. Interactive Mapping: the bird’s nest produces soft and quiet voices

Contextual Interpretation

The adjective ‘murmuring’ which is derived from the verb ‘murmur’ is used to describe a man who murmurs to the ear of another man. Therefore, this adjective is a human attribute and not an attribute to signify non-human object ‘thread’. Dickinson intends to say that the nest which is at the top of the pine tree makes sounds when the breezes blow and as if a human being murmurs above the pine tree and among its emerald leaves.

8. The Perfect, nowhere be afraid—

They bear their **dauntless** Heads,

(Poem 242, Stanza3, Page 110)

A. Focus: heads

B. Frame: dauntless

C. Interactive Mapping: the immortality of saints who died.

Contextual Interpretation

Synecdoche, which is a figure of speech, was employed by Emily Dickinson when she used the dauntless heads to stand for the whole bodies or personae of the dead saints. The derivative adjective ‘dauntless’ illustrates that the dead saints are immortal and unflinching and they alive spiritually and they are watching us now.

9. 'Twas such a **greedy, greedy** wave

That licked it from the Coast –

(Poem 107, Stanza 2, Page 52)

A. Focus: wave

B. Frame: greedy

C. Interactive Mapping: strong and destructive wave.

Contextual Interpretation



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Metaphorization is very evident in this expression because the noun ‘wave’ has been personified by the adjective ‘greedy’ which is already an attribute used to describe a human as being avaricious. Anyway, the focus ‘wave’ and the frame ‘greedy’ have a set of common implications in that they denote something negative or saboteur. The poet blatantly describes a solemn boat which was destroyed by a very huge wave and even the boat was lost in the sea and no one saw its remaining.

10. Or if it dare — to climb your **dizzy** knee

(Poem 186, Stanza 2, Page 88)

A. Focus: knee

B. Frame: dizzy

C. Interactive Mapping: sick and unsettled

Contextual Interpretation

The adjective ‘dizzy’ lexically collocates with a human being, specifically when someone says ‘dizzy head’ or ‘dizzy man’, but it is not logical to say dizzy knee because the knee can be sick or broken or torn but cannot be dizzy. Hence, Dickinson attempts to integrate the notion that if the knee is torn or unsettled, it makes the man dizzy in his walking and cannot control himself.

11. The **saddest** noise, the **sweetest** noise,

(Poem 186, Stanza 2, Page 88)

A. Focus: noise

B. Frame: saddest and sweetest

C. Interactive Mapping: the bird’s sounds are sad yet nice.

Contextual Interpretation

There is an evident contrast and incompatibility between the noun ‘noise’ and the two adjectives ‘saddest’ and ‘sweetest’ which function as premodifiers for the noun ‘noise’ because the adjective ‘sad’ requires a human being and ‘sweet’ needs a noun of food or nourishing things. Dickinson intentionally collocated these adjectives with the noun noise to emphasize the beauty and loveliness of the bird when it emits its high sounds.

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 12. To what **delicious** Accident
 Does finest Glory fit!

(Poem 1265, Stanza 1, Page 554)

A. Focus: delicious

B. Frame: accident

C. Interactive Mapping: the accident might be advantageous for a man.

Contextual Interpretation

The adjective ‘delicious’ lexically collocates with foods and victuals or anything edible, but it is not semantically acceptable to collocate it with abstract things like accident. It requires a human or animal noun. Dickinson attempts to ensure that some accidents might be useful not harmful for people because these accidents increase the people’s awareness of death or the second life – there are mystical or religious implications beyond these accidents.

4.3.1 Senses Conveyed by Metaphoric Adjectives

The adjectives, which were used by Dickinson in her different poems, were metaphorized to give certain meanings and themes different from the literal meanings of the adjectives, which are basic meanings. For instance, the adjective ‘delicious’ is used with nouns that denote foods and nourishment, but if it is used with nouns that denote abstract objects, in this case the adjective is being metaphorized. The table below contains the metaphoric adjectives, their meanings and frequency in the contexts of the poems.

Table (1): Senses and Frequency of Metaphoric Adjectives

No.	Metaphorized Adjectives	Form	Senses Conveyed	Numbers
1.	Cunning	Derived	Harmful	6
2.	Pretty	Source	Good	2
3.	Smoldering	Derived	Feeling	2
4.	Palpitating	Derived	Feeling	1
5.	Pouting	Derived	Disapproving	2
6.	Drunken	Derived	Very busy	5
7.	Murmuring	Derived	Speaking quietly	3
8.	Dauntless	Derived	Very determined	2
9.	Greedy	Derived	Huge	3
10.	Dizzy	Source	Sick; unsettled	3
11.	Sad	Source	Bad	3
12.	Sweet	Source	Good	85
13.	Delicious	Source	Advantageous	5

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It has been noted that Dickinson used abstract and concrete adjectives that indicate emotions, perceptions, behaviors and senses to connote abstract and sentimental emotions. Baker (2004) states that adjectives denoting states or properties are widely used in different contexts. The source adjective 'delicious' was the most frequently used one by Dickinson in all her poems which is amounted to (85) times. Entirely, she never used the adjective 'delicious' with a noun indicating food. Therefore, she is lexically peculiar in selecting the adjective and the use of one adjective, not collocating with the noun, instead of the others in a given context illustrates that Dickinson intends to engender a rhetorical image that encompasses a symbolic meaning. However, Breban (2010) stresses on the idea that adjectives are performative where they are used to describe or modify or limit things, but this role is continuously done in relationship with nouns directly. Morphologically, Dickinson was capable of producing adjectives from verbs that gave meanings different from the meanings indicated by dictionaries.

5. Findings and Discussion

According to the above analysis, Emily Dickinson has used many adjectives metaphorically which depended on the syntactic construction 'adjective + noun'. Figuratively, she collocated adjectives with nouns where these adjectives were not in lexical conformity with nouns following them. But such a violation of the lexical collocations brings about metaphorization, which is the poet's peculiar technique of creating metaphoric images. Reading her various poems, one can notice that there is a gradual development of juxtaposing adjectives with nouns metaphorically. For instance, she used sensational adjectives naturally attributed to humans, but she attributed them to animals, such as the expression 'giddy bird in orchard'. Along with the framework of metaphorizing some adjectives, she also used other figures of speech with adjectives in order to incorporate certain metaphoric images, such as personification and synecdoche. The expressions 'murmuring thread' and 'bewildered thread' are stereotypes of personifying non-human objects by giving them human attributes, hence the thread is an abstract and non-human thing and cannot be murmuring or bewildering. Synecdoche was also recruited in examples like 'clutched tight by greedy hands' where the hands are references to the dead saints. Also, the expression 'dauntless heads' is figuratively synecdoche because she uses the part the 'head' or 'hands' to stand for the whole body of the human being. On the other hand, she played on words in order to create metaphoric expressions that give the reader vivid embodiment for the personal agonies and attitudes she wants to convey. Lexically, she uses different semantic molds of creating the metaphoric

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images represented by adjective + noun patterns, such as abstract + concrete or concrete + abstract or abstract + abstract. Practically, she formulated the expression ‘frugal eyes’ where the adjective frugal is abstract and the poet collocated it with the concrete human organ ‘eyes’. The adjective ‘smoldering’ which requires a concrete object, but was used with the abstract noun ‘anguish’ and the reason behind such violation is to create a metaphoric image that conveys the poet’s intention that the agony is very severe and everlasting.

6. Conclusion

Investigating Dickinson’s employment of various adjectives figuratively has confirmed that she metaphorized many adjectives after collocating them with nouns that are not compatible with their senses. However, she has been quick-witted in picking up the adjective to incorporate it with a certain noun in order to eventually synthesize a kind of metaphor that encompasses a hidden or implicit meaning. Deliberately Dickinson resorts to such technique of establishing metaphor of adjective + noun pattern to add a special rhetorical flavor to her language, meanwhile to let the readers perceive the intentions concealed in the metaphoric adjective. Structurally, she mostly adopted simple and derivative adjectives that are prepared to be metaphoric when collocating with nouns. Noticeably, she also used compound adjectives, specifically hyphenated compound adjectives which she coined them by herself, such as ‘soft’ as a simple source adjective in the expression ‘soft eclipse’, and ‘fashionless’ as a derived adjective in the Dickinson’s poetic line ‘a fashionless delight’. There are very few compound adjectives formed by Dickinson which were observed in her poems, such as ‘new-fashioned’ in the expression ‘in your new-fashioned world! This, in fact, means she evidently forms compound adjectives that follow the syntactic pattern ‘Adjective + Adjective = Adjective. Hence, the resultant grammatical class is adjective.

Figuratively, she visibly nourished her adjectives with certain semantic features like accompanying an abstract adjective with a concrete noun or a concrete adjective with an abstract noun in order to symbolize certain images wrapped with themes in the poet’s mind. She evidently stirred the reader when she personified certain objects in different situations and that was seen in her usage of the adjective ‘drunken’ in her line ‘when landlords turn the ‘drunken bee’, which should be used with a noun like men or women, but by doing so she attempts to show that bees are intoxicated by the beauty and charm of nature represented by flowers and their outflowing nectars compared with the situation of the drunken man who forgot all his agonies, life pitfalls, being carefree and exulting

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with his life when he gets drunken. In conclusion, the adjective has played an important role in Dickinson's poetry to create metaphoric expressions and she exploited the syntactic function of the attributive adjectives as functioning as premodifiers for nouns following them, and cause new meanings, which are contradictory to the literal meanings conveyed by adjectives before metaphorizing them.

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