

An Analysis of Lexical Meaning in Edwin Muir’s “The Combat”

A Research by

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Abstract

The lexicon of a language can be viewed as the compendium of all its words. Words, which are also called lexical items or lexemes, are the main components of every text. The branch of semantics which deals with word meaning, called lexical semantics, is used in the present research. Lexical semantics examines the relationships among word meaning. The questions are: what do language users mean when they say, for example; a cat is a type of mammal? Do ‘small’ and ‘big’ have the same relationship with each other like the pair ‘dark’ and ‘light’? Is there a difference between the relationship of ‘always and never’ and ‘often and seldom’? Lexical semantics investigates such problems. It is the study of how the lexicon is organized and how the meaning of lexical items is interrelated. The goal of lexical semantics is to build up a model for the structure of the lexicon by categorizing the types of relationships between words.

Keeping in mind the above entry, the aim of the present research is to show the linguistic meaning in the poem “The Combat” written by *Edwin Muir* (1887-1959). There are several types of lexical analyses like: denotation, connotation, ambiguity, antonym, synonymy, and so on. The present research analyzes the lexical meanings in the selected poem, but the analysis mainly includes some of the poetic features only. This will be exposed in the lexical discussions of the words and lexemes composing the collocations as well.

This research paper achieves its objectives of lexical investigation by tackling the following sections: Literary Competence, Poetry and Deviated discourse, “The Combat” as a poem, Collocations in “The Combat”, The Lexical Meanings in the poem, and the Conclusions. The last section is the list of the books consulted.

تحليل لكسيومات المعنى في قصيدة أدوين ميور الموسومة بالمنازلة

الخلاصة

يحلل هذا البحث لكسيومات المعنى في قصيدة أدوين ميور الموسومة بالمنازلة و هي من أكثر قصائده شهرة و إنتشاراً . و يجري هذا التحليل في خمسة مباحث رئيسية تعقبها النتائج التي تشير الى أن الأثر الجمالي و البعد الشعري لهذه القصيدة يتأسسان على إستيعاب أفكار سامية مطروقة سلفاً لكنه تم عرضها شعرياً ضمن نسق ذي درجة عالية من الإنتقاء اللكسيمي بحيث تؤدي المفردات في تأثيرها الدلالي الى تغريب المؤلف حسب مقتضيات القصيدة مفاهيمياً ، بدرجة الميل و الإنحراف عن المدلول المطروق في الكلمة المنفردة في الابيات الشعرية .

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Literary Competence

In making a distinction between literary and non-literary texts, two positions adopted by essentialists and conventionalists are rejected as being too extremists. While the former characterizes literature in terms of those inherent and exclusive features which make its language distinguished from other forms of communication and assigns to it a separate grammar, the latter regards literature as what one reads and interprets as literature. A discourse approach toward literature considers a literary effect to be the result of special patterning of language patterns (Hasan, 1985). This mode of patterning and the degree of it differ from text to text. It follows that stylistic studies prefer to adopt a scale along which they will arrange different literary works rather than making a clear-cut dichotomy. This will be applicable to "The Combat" as will be discussed in this research paper.

Widdowson (1983) distinguishes literary from non-literary discourse with reference to his classification of "systemic" and "schematic" knowledge. Systemic knowledge is introduced by Widdowson as a kind of knowledge which operates at the level of language system and is limited to rules of grammar. But the latter is defined as the knowledge of contextual meaning. He argues that in conventional discourse, we rely on schematic

knowledge. It means that when we receive information, we develop a set of expectations with reference to our "schemata" or "frames of reference" to which we try to converge symbolic meaning. But since literary discourse is dislocated from an immediate social context, there exists no conventional schemata. Consequently, we have to create our own literary schemata through a specific patterning of linguistic items. This linguistic organization is over and beyond the code structure; in other words, it is superimposed upon normal linguistic organization. More specifically, Carter (1997) proposes some criteria which enable us to specify one text to be more or less literary than another. These criteria are defined at six levels: medium dependence, re-registration, semantic density produced by interaction of linguistic levels, displaced interaction, polysemy and discourse processing. Among these, semantic density which tends to be closely connected with the purpose of the present study is introduced as having the utmost importance of defining criteria. Semantic density determines the degree of literariness based on the degree of interaction of language patterns on the levels of syntax, lexis, phonology and discourse. In this regard, carter also develops the notion of "contrast" as literary phenomena which occur whenever a predominant pattern makes contrast with an almost equally pre-established one. Multiple interaction of language levels, particularly in the form of contrast results in the representation of a meaning symbolically in a way that the reader will activate more than one meaning in making relations between linguistic forms and semantic functions.

The development of the concept of language as "social Semiotic System" by Halliday (1978) is a notable achievement since it provides a systematic account of the way language reflects aspects of the situation in which it occurs. Thus, particular situational aspects are reflected in the linguistic choices made by the participants in those situations. So, context precedes text, i.e. the situation is prior to the discourse that relates to it. Thus, the context of "The Combat" must necessarily precede the text of the said poem. Likewise, its setting: time and place herald the verses of the poem. Our deduction and inferences from the lines affect our predictions. In this way, our understanding of the meaning of a text depends on the predictions we make from those aspects of context, i.e. what is going on

(field) and who are taking part in discourse (tenor) help us to understand the special meaning achieved by means of language. As language users we use the information provided by field and tenor of discourse in order to comprehend linguistic choices. Thus, language competence can be defined as the ability to process language from event dimension to linguistic dimension. In literary discourse, there is no pre-established context of situation, and no frame of reference based on earlier events which we could understand situational meaning. In fact it is the linguistic choices which create their own context. So the processing of literary language moves in the direction opposite to that of conventional discourse. By implication, literary competence can be defined as the ability to process language from text dimension to event dimension. Like others, to establish a criterion for making distinction between literature and non-literature, we can claim that the more we rely on the text for making predictions on situated meaning, the more literary the text will be. So, if the text happens to be a poetic text, it will have to work through figurative language that relies on imagery, or rather, lexical items that suggests certain images to the readers senses guided by the intellect. In this respect, S.H.Burton writes in his *Criticism of Poetry* (1982,p.97): “Imagery in poetry is an equal to the senses through words. Through the senses, the EMOTIONS, and INTELLECT of the reader can be swiftly stirred”. (Emphases are ours)

As it will be seen in the next sections, particularly in the analytic parts, the lexical units that express the images are verbal units that appeal to the senses and higher emotions through the intellect. Thus, *The Combat*, as a serious poem, speaks through the intellectual, rational faculty in its communication of an unfamiliar and a defamiliarized cosmological, universalized vision of combat taken to its highest power. This is done through Muir’s special treatment of language as a “representation system.”

Poetry as a deviated discourse

If we define poetry in terms of its specific phonological, syntactic and/or semantic relations, we have confined it to the boundary of a text. Such a view suggests that poetry is the end product of exploiting all these patterns by the poet. And the reader encounters this end product, reads it and may adopt a kind of cognitive or aesthetic effect. But since high

attention is given to the function performed by poetic genre, it is necessary to go beyond text dimension and consider poetry as a discourse. Verdonk (1991) defines a poem's discourse as a contextual and interpersonal activity with the purpose of transmitting a literary message from the author to the reader. In other words, the poet's text becomes a meaningful discourse when the reader reads it and builds up interpersonal and socio-cultural context around it. In the dynamic communicative process between the author and the reader, the linguistic structures act as impulses which fulfill or frustrate the reader's expectations so that the reader's emotions continuously change. There is no unanimous description of the nature of poetry since it avoids any norms which confine it to a single interpretation. In other words, everybody preserves one's individuality in its interpretation by adopting one's own impressions and attitudes. While taking this unconventional character of a poetic text into consideration, several stylisticians propose some features for poetry though they lay themselves open to more discussion and controversy. There is a representational mode of meaning in poetry. This feature can be regarded as the most striking and determinant characteristic of poetry, since other features are subsequently extracted from it. Poetry is supposed to represent a separate reality from the ordinary world, while in common communication language is used to refer to the external world and the context with which the reader has enough experience and familiarity; and relying on it he develops his schematic knowledge.

Hence, in ordinary communication, the linguistic code acts as indices which direct one to extra linguistic contextual factors in order to get out and derive relevant information (Widdowson, 1990). The absence of a conventional world based on reality, the reader of "The Combat" as a poetic text could make predictions for its understanding necessitates that the language of poetry replaces its referential and indexical role by a representational one in which it creates in its own potential context. To construct such a context, the poet establishes a set of new conventions which violate the norms of standard language. Representation of meaning in this way lays the foundation for developing a local schematic knowledge. (McIntyre and Busse, pp.116-133)

Poetry is open to various interpretations. In fact, the meaning of “The Combat” varies not only from one reader to another, but also from one reading to another, i.e. every time one reads the same poem, one perceives its message differently, and consequently one receives a new effect. The multiplicity of interpretations of “The Combat” shows that a poetic utterance can be traced back to the volatile nature of the relationship between form and meaning in the said text. Put it differently, by increasing the degree of indeterminacy, the conventionality decreases, and the relativity of meaning will increase. By reducing the meaning of a poem to a precise interpretation, we assign it an indexical role in which some linguistic signs refer to a conventionalized pre-established meaning. Denying contextual interpretation, Widdowson (1992) regards the interpretation of poetry as being textual, contributing to representational meaning. It follows from this that “The Combat” demonstrates, among many other things, the progress of ideas along with the progress of depicting unfamiliar or defamiliarized images expressed by lexical items may not be semantically comprehensible at first sight. The aim of the poet is to show a representation of a cosmological conflict. The words of Napoli and Shoenfeld apply here: “It may be possible to describe our thought processes through some representational system.” (p.50,2010)

This “representational system” that the text reflects is constructed by and consists of the LEXEMS, which in turn create the inspired images that give the impression of mystery and epic sublimity.

As mentioned earlier, the very existence of poetry depends on representing some aspects of reality in a new way and creating new images of reality which do not exist outside the language. In fact, the way an ordinary subject is represented in an unfamiliar way produces the aesthetic effect of poetry, not the subject matter itself. To this end, the poet enjoys freedom of pre-established norms of language, i.e. the conventional restrictions which exist on different levels of language including lexical, grammatical, semantic, and even discourse (Widdowson, 1992). To justify the discourse of the poetry to be deviated, it should be argued that since the communicative situation of a poem is completely detached from the usual process of social interaction, those shared social conventions accepted by participants involved in normal communication are disobeyed in the

context of poetry. Furthermore, the co-operative principles for effective communication are not observed (Widdowson, 1975). Such an apparent contradiction can be claimed to result in lack of clarity; however, destroying the existing order, the poem creates another one at the same time. In this respect, "The Combat" illustrates an atmosphere that is extremely different from the existing order that resides outside the text. However, it is still based on similar elements and components from the old order, as will be demonstrated. This new order of patterning contributes to "maximum coherence" which is regarded to be as another feature of poetry.

The contextual detachment of a poem results in the creation of an imaginary internal context which is peculiar to that poem. In representing such a context, everything violates common-place conventional order. The poem will have its own inner world, its own internal logic, its own intrinsic, and unusual setting of time and place. Although these elements lose their referential stability in the real world, they gain their value within the boundary of the poem through their close interrelationship. In other words, every single element, whether linguistic or not, contributes to its total meaning. According to Widdowson(1992:24), "In denying one kind of regularity, the poem asserts its own." Thus, "The Combat" denies the regularity of the ordinary, unjust world. In this regard, linguistic patterns across all phonological, lexical, grammatical and graphological levels consistently realize the semantic unity of the poem.

Concerning the phonological level, one can refer to meter and rhyme as two prosodic patterns which contribute to coherence. More strikingly, lexical items contribute to creating the context of the poem through their association with each other. Put it another way, the value of every lexical item such as: "toad, adder, accuse, and tear" cannot be specified without referring to its neighboring words. The patterning of syntactic structures in equivalent patterns can also suggest some common semantic features of the poem. As a graphological element, the vertical arrangement of the poem makes it significantly coherent, since it develops equivalent structures in terms of meter and syntax. In sum, this kind of patterning of language patterns is so influential in the representation of meaning that if it changes, the meaning will be reflected differently. The concept of maximum coherence as used here has been emphasized by many stylisticians,

although they give it different titles such as: cohesion of foregrounding (Leech,1969); consistency of foregrounding (Hasan, 1971,1985); motivated foregrounding (Halliday, 1971); semantic drift (Butt, 1988b); independent coherence (Widdowson, 1992); and literary coherence (Lotfipour, 1992).

Among all linguistic devices discussed earlier as contributing to "maximal coherence" of a poetic text, lexical patterns appear to play a considerably important role. Every lexical item, according to Cummings and Simmons (1983), contributes to producing images in poetry, either directly or in an oblique manner. Once an image has been established in a poem, all lexical items in the poem may probably be applied to it by extending their meaning metaphorically. This causes the phenomenon called "the Double Identity of Meaning" which is expounded in William Ray's *Literary Meaning*. Even those lexical items which seem apparently unrelated to the established images can be attributed to the role of creating additional images for the purpose of making the experience of the poem more complex. In this regard, strings of related lexis in a poem can help the reader to understand how the poem creates and co-ordinates different levels of imagery, in order to convey the sense of an experience. In fact, to get the reader involved in the experiencing of the same emotional, intellectual and intuitional senses, the poet uses words for the purpose of suggesting various contexts in a way that the reader enters experience: Confused as to which is meant, knowing somehow that all are meant, but also that none are exactly meant, the reader can resolve his problem only by extending the writer's experience.

By comprehending the poet's many suggested contexts, we may enter his visions. In the interplay of these different contexts, we are able to recreate the poet's experience (Cummings and Simmons, 1983:172). As such, any single lexical item or a group of related items may produce a context in poetry. Each context created in this way gets the reader involved in a momentary experience of poet's state. The nearly created context contrasts or combines with other contexts. This sort of shift of contexts creates an "aesthetic view" of poetry. This view sees poetry as an abstract experience of language in which rapid shifts of contexts, helped by the movement of sound and grammar, do not give the reader an impression, but a series of experiences (Cummings and Simmons, 1983). This ambivalence

which is generated by either a single word or some lexical patterns spanning the whole poem, allows the reader to shift from an obvious reference to some kind of fact, to a disguised reference, and to a state of feeling (Nash, 1993). The experiences and the disguised references in the present case would be those that are the verbal universe of "The Combat."

Edwin Muir's "The Combat" as a Poem

The Combat was written by the Scottish poet Edwin Muir (1887-1959). Reviewing the 1937 volume, *Journeys and Places*, for the *London Mercury*, the poet Stephen Spender (1909-1995) noted that the collection:

contains the best poems [Muir] has written and some of the most serious, interesting, and individual poems of our time . . . His poetry is not poetry for poetry's sake, it develops an argument about time, which, it strikes one, might have been developed in a prose thesis or in an imaginative fiction. Yet, in his poetry Edwin Muir has discovered a language which expresses this argument in the most vivid and direct way possible by means of an imagery so precise that the prose meaning would seem a circuitous way of describing what can be held instantaneously by a single poetic image.

Muir is better famed for his translations, with his wife Willa Muir, of the Czech writer Franz Kafka (1883-1924). Thus, he did not write poetry till uncommonly late. *The Combat*, first published in the late 1940's when Muir was once again posted to Prague, echoes his constant mediation between archaic figures that surge to the surface of consciousness out of dreams, and the daunting depersonalization of modern life. The poem takes its beginning from a childhood incident in the Orkneys when Muir was five or six. That incident instigated a dream some twenty years later, and the poem did not get written till much later still. It first appeared in book form in his 1949 volume, *The Labyrinth*, which suggests that the theme was urgent enough to engage Muir's mind for over fifty years. "The Combat" shows signs of drawing on dream imagery and archetypal myth. (Wikipedia)

This poem is Muir's most frequently anthologized poem. It narrates the bouts of eternal conflict between evil and good; the dark forces against the kindly spirit of goodness. In appearance, the evil creature is invincible, but in the reality, it is the small, humble, thin rabbitlike hobbit that remains undefeated.

Collocations in “The Combat”

According to Trask’s *Dictionary of Grammatical Terms in Linguistics*, collocation is: “A selectional restriction, particularly one which is usually idiosyncratic or language-specific. Grill (USA:Broil) collocates with ‘meat’ but not with ‘bread’, while the reverse is true for ‘toast’.” (p.49)

As expounded in the sections above, poetry modifies the usual norm to produce its own literary, poetic form which is distinguishable from a non-literary discourse. Let us examine some of the lexemes collocated in the poem, whether in the ‘usually idiosyncratic’ manner or in the expected language-specific manner of epithet arrangement peculiar to and expected in English. The following are the items that range from the usual to the unusual, from the comprehensible to the puzzling:

<i>Human eyes</i>	(line 1)
<i>Shabby patch</i>	(line 2)
<i>Trampled turf</i>	(line 3)
<i>Sodden skies</i>	(line 4)
<i>Crested animal</i>	(line 7)
<i>Royal hues</i>	(line 8)
<i>Whetted beak</i>	(line 12)
<i>Frost-grey hedge</i>	(line 13)
<i>Soft round beast</i>	(line 17)
<i>Wretched skin</i>	(line 18)
<i>Battered bag</i>	(line 19)
<i>Old used thing</i>	(line 20)
<i>Furious beast</i>	(line 22)
<i>Swift attack</i>	(line 22)

<i>Small paws</i>	(line 26)
<i>Deadly fury</i>	(line 35)
<i>Grating thorn</i>	(line 38)
<i>A little sound</i>	(line 39)
<i>Stealthy paws</i>	(line 41)
<i>Unequal battle</i>	(line 47)
<i>Killing beast</i>	(line 48)

In the collocations above, there is an element of distance from the usual manner of expression encountered in the non-poetic texts. It is more natural to say ‘sullen sky’ or ‘stormy, overcast, grey, dull, cloudy, heavy, gloomy sky’ than ‘sodden sky.’ Likewise, it is more natural to speak of ‘royal robes, royal outfits, and royal garments’ than royal hues. It is the usual practice to speak of ‘chapped skin,’ ‘coarse, worn-out, rough, irritated, diseased, blistered, itchy, shabby, pathological skin’ rather than ‘wretched skin’.

There are more complicated, less familiar, less predictable collocations of lexical items such as the ‘crested animal,’ which is in ‘royal hues,’ because it has a ‘whetted beak’ meaning that it is sharp, pointed, and murderous. “The Combat” itself is defamiliarized poetically as a ‘swift attack,’ ‘unequal battle,’ and ‘the fury,’ which leads the mighty beast to ‘despair’. Basically, the conflict in the poem involves the huge ‘crested animal’ who is the beast in the denotation, emotive sense and the ‘soft round beast’ that is only ironically a beast. He is seen as the beast by the ‘furious beast’ that is the ‘animal in his pride line7).The omniscient narrator views the small rabbit like creatures as a ‘battered bag’ or a ‘used thing to throw away.....line 20’.

It is the ‘creature’ that ‘would not die.....line 30’. He/it is the superhuman victor. He is ‘huddled into his den, / safe somewhat there all: 31-32’. The same applies to ‘a beast so helpless and so brave’, which is

also an ironic, intentional misnomer of the small creature; the real beast is the ‘killing beast.’

The lexeme reviewed above is there for a number of functions:

- a. To avoid the monotony of repetition.
- b. To confirm the defamiliarization of the familiar.
- c. To add an epiclike breath and ardor of mystery, as Rhian Williams says in her Poetry toolkit (2009, p.216): “.....poetry excels at making readers encounter words in new and enriching ways. This may be achieved the by giving words or phrases strange applications....., or by using words in a sense that is grammatically usual.... These tricks of language all play on the MEANING of words..... “ (Emphasis belongs to Rhian Williams)

It is evident from William’s quotation above that the poet (in our case, Edwin Muir) can give himself the right to deviate from the expected norm. hence, semantic ambiguities may arise from the purposeful ‘strange application’ of the lexemes, especially in the epithets composed of collocations.

The Lexical meanings in “The Combat”

The flow and progress of ideas in “The Combat” are much affected by the images invoked through the metaphors carried out by the lexical units of the poetic text. This poem is an interesting case in which Muir takes the poetic license in as concerns the lexemes and the semantics. Likewise, Muir is quite determined to take his license through an epic like atmosphere outside any familiar chronotope.

It will be hard to include all types of the poetic lexical features. Hereby, that will need a more meticulous analysis and “The Combat” strenuous approach. However the analysis presentation will include the following:

1. Denotation: if the term is given a straightforward definition, it will be as the meaning of a word which primarily refers to a lexical unit in the manner which is often given in dictionaries and lexical entries and this is often the definition which is given in the dictionary. As Sokhanvar says: “denotation is the dictionary meaning of a word. Connotation is the shade of meaning words have acquired through association and use.” A dictionary defines ‘galleon’ as a ‘sailing vessel.... used for commerce’. This is the denotation of galleon. Among its connotations are ‘romance,’ ‘adventure,’ and ‘piracy.’ (Sokhanvar, 2002,p. 11).

The denotation that can be found in *The Combat* is represented by such items as:

Somewhere beneath the sodden skies (line 4)

Also, a very direct line like this one:

I shall not see his like again (line 15)

For eye of toad or adder to catch (line5)

While every word can be found in a lexicon, the meaning and understanding are not fulfilled by merely knowing the dictionary explanation of ‘catch,’ ‘eye,’ ‘toad,’ or ‘adder.’

2. Edwin Muir avoids entries that have acquired “low” associations or words that suggest the undesirable assembly of images and intellectual concepts. Connotation which arises as words becomes related with certain characteristics as items to which they refer with the invocation of either positive or negative feelings. This may, or may not, be indicated in the dictionary definition:

And two small paws like hands flew out

The dictionary meaning of *small* is: *tiny, petite*. In the poem the meaning does not have the same connotation as the dictionary implies, actually the meaning is *big* because it is the hands of a beast which are illustrated as big as a bear’s in the text.

3. Homonym: indicates ambiguous words, phrases, or sentences refer to those which can be understood or interpreted in more than one way.

Body of leopard, eagle’s head
And whetted beak, and lion’s mane,
And frost-grey hedge of feathers spread

The underlined phrases above can be understood in different ways; they can all mean or indicate the description of the beast. At the same time, each phrase may refer to a different meaning; each may refer to a different country, or a particular nation. According to Trask’s *Language and Linguistics Key Concepts* 2007, the central meaning of a linguistic form is sense in prototype, stereotype, and denotation levels. But the several various ways in which the meanings of words may be understood are called “sense relations” (pp.254-256). There are several kinds of embodying these relations such as: synonyms, cognitive synonyms, gradable antonyms, binary antonyms, and so on.

4. Antonym refers to a word that means the opposite to another. There are three types of antonyms: gradable, complementary, and relational. Both combatants are referred to as ‘champions’ in (line 40). But, only one of them is a champion. The big one killing the small beast is only a murderous bully ironically called ‘champion.’

- a. Gradable antonyms refer to the members of one group of words which differ in terms of degree. The denial of one word does not mean the assertion of the other. In the following line of the poem, we can see that both *old* and *used* belong to the same group of words which are the opposite of *new*:

Some old used thing to throw away

- b. Complementary Antonyms, the members of one group in this type are complementary to one another. Not only does the assertion of one means the denial of the other, the denial of one also mean the assertion of the other. *Over* and *down* belong to the same group of words which means *finished*. The denial of *over* is the assertion of *done*:

Soon over and done. That was no place

- c. Relational Antonyms, they show the reversal of the relationship between two entities. *Kill* and *despair* are examples of such antonyms:

*The killing beast that cannot kill
Swells and swells in his fury till
You'd almost think it was despair*

Such lexemes are mostly suggestive of the concrete parallels of the abstractions (i.e. ill vs. despair/ suggesting murder vs. fear of penalty).

5. Synonym refers to words which can be any part of speech (e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs or prepositions), as long as both members of the pair are the same part of speech. In the following line, we can see that the nouns *chivalry* and *grace* have the same meaning of *nobility*. Chivalry is able to crowd the reader's mind with emotional, virtuous combinations that contrast the beastly, murderous conducted of 'crested animal'.

Or time for chivalry or for grace

6. Hyponymy refers to a word with a particular meaning that is included in the meaning of a more general word. A word that represents different

categories covered by a super ordinate; a general term that includes various different words representing narrower categories called Hyponyms. The word *beast* which first appears in the following line may mean: *beast* (literary), *the enemy*, *a bad person*, *a hated person*, or *evil*:

A soft round beast as brown as clay;

7. Polysemy is a word that has multiple meaning. The word *death* in the following line may refer to: *the death of the beast*, *the death of the enemy*, or *the death of humanity*:

For ere the death-stroke he was gone,

The outcome of this analysis will be shown more precisely in the conclusion section. However, for a generalized and universalized end, the points above reveal that the conflict in “The Combat” is allegorized by the intentional semantic strategy of the poet, causing a fruitful, creative type of ambiguity and mystery that is in line with the epic like dimension of the poem. Likewise, the conflict is ritualized as a form of ceremonial, repeated, and renewable action, which is the source that triggers imaginative interpretations and discussions. Thus, Muir builds up, in only fifty lines, a universal text abundant with mystery that might take other poets more lines and additional lexical items.

Conclusion

Semantics is one of the branches of linguistics which studies meaning and its power. The meaning by itself is categorized into three levels: the lexical meaning, the sentential meaning, and the discourse meaning. Analyzing Edward Muir's "The Combat," it can be concluded that some lexical meaning features, such as connotation, polisemy, antonym, synonym, and hyponym are able to affect the patterning of poetic language and give insight to other contextual readings.

Poetry achieves its high value because of the very special and unique nature of strategies adopted by its authors. The most important strategy in poetry is the "representation" of a separate reality from the conventional world. It is this isolation from an external context that makes poetry the formal art of language. In this way the poem generates its own imaginary world not only by making original use of the established possibilities, but also through creating new communicative possibilities. Being completely detached from the external world, poetry possesses just one particular context which is provided by special patterning of its own lexis. As image-creating elements, lexical patterns in a poem create a series of contexts or immediate situations which are conventional to the code. The poem makes both novel and wide use of lexical resources in order to enrich the imaginary potential of the text. As such, the poem brings words from disparate collocational ranges together and consequently transforms, twists, and defamiliarises the accepted structure of predictable language. Put it in simple words, the semantic distance existing among different lexical items in a poem contributes to the appearance of multiple referential contexts in terms of lexical fields. The sudden shift of these various contexts without being defined adequately violates the expectancy of the reader for receiving a single picture with sufficient elaborations on it, as is the case with non-literary texts, thus keeping him/her in a state of suspension.

To overcome this heterogeneity, the reader will be involved in a long and difficult process of perceiving these divergent images, trying to integrate them into a convergent whole, a higher-order context which is usually recognized as the "theme" of the poem. In fact, this type of "deviation" is not random, but discursively motivated to enforce the reader

to go beyond the mere perceiving of the text to the active processing of the discourse.

This research tries to argue illustratively how poetry produces an aesthetic effect by dispersing meaning and absorbing ideas through special and particular lexical choices. It does not aim at describing the literary effect produced by a poem in purely aesthetic terms, but just intends to identify precisely the cause in the text and explain how, why and where this effect comes from. As a last word, we claim that not more than a start has been made here on the enriching, and inspiring “The Combat” mysterious world of poetry. But we are already in a position to support the idea which is clearly mentioned by Widdowson: “We cannot understand the aesthetic effect of poetry without recognizing what kind of discourse it is and the nature of its deviance from normal language” (Widdowson, 1984:149).

So, turns out to be a text that is literary, poetic, and creative, in a noteworthy manner due to the poet’s careful treatment of the semantic aspects, the poetic devices, and the concepts of the poem. The knowledge of its contextual meanings can help in discussing the poem. However, as our analysis has shown, its built-in universe can be approached on its own, by virtue of its semantic dimensions, based on special patterning of the lexemes.

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