Semantic Primes in Mohammed Khudayer's The Swing: A Syntactico-Semantic Study

Lect. Dr. Ahmed Manea Hoshan
Dept. of English , College of Arts , University of Basrah

Abstract:

This paper endeavors to investigate/explicate the Semantic Primes of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach in *The Swing*, a short story written by the Iraqi writer Mohammed Khudayer (1967) following Goddard and Wierzbicka (2014) approach of analysis (Semantic Primes of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach (**NSM**). Semantic primes are the minimum sets of lexical words/expressions shared by world languages which are the indefinable and indecomposable markers of universality between world languages. This research has concluded that Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth, MSA) is a language that encodes these semantic primes via certain mechanisms.

Keywords: Natural Semantic Metalanguage; Semantic Primes; MSA; Wierzbicka and Goddard's Approach 92014)*; The Swing*.

ألبنيات الأساسية ألدلالية في قصة "ألارجوحة" لمحمد خضير: دراسة نحوية– دلالية

م. د. أحمد مانع حوشان
قسم اللغة ألأنكليزية، كلية الآداب، جامعة البصرة

ملخص البحث:

تحاول هذه الدراسة استقصاء و توضيح الأساسيات الدلالية لمقترب ألميتا– لغة الطبيعية في القصة القصيرة "ألارجوحة" للكاتب العراقي محمد خضير (١٩٦٧)، بأتباع أنموذج كودارد و ويرزبيكا (٢٠١٤) للتحليل. وألبنيات الأساسية ألدلالية هي المجموعات الدنيا من المفردات /ألتعابير المعجمية التي تشترك فيها أللغات ألعالمية. وتعتبر دلالات عالمية بين اللغات ،غير قابلة للتعريف ولا يمكن تجزئتها. كما و استدل البحث على أن اللغة العربية الفصحى هي أحدى اللغات التي تضمنها باليات شتى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ألميتا– لغة الطبيعية، ألبنيات الأساسية الدلالية، أللغة العربية الفصحى، أنموذج كودارد و ويرزبيكا (٢٠١٤)، "ألأرجوحة".

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1. Introduction

The universality of meaning in world languages has long been the main task/goal of philosophers, linguists and scholars. To this aim, different theories and hypotheses have been proposed, as languages share many common properties that testify to its universality. These properties might be components such as lexical words or expressions that exist in world languages with different forms/structures (Chomsky,1975).

The aim of this study is to investigate one of the "attempts" that try to find out some common-core or reciprocal/mutual shared properties and/or components that are distributed among world languages, and MSA is an example. The research starts with an overview of the preliminaries, then moves to explicate the "category" of semantic primes and the main issues related with it. Some account of literature review is also demonstrated in the work. As concerns semantic primes in MSA, the short story, *The Swing* has been selected as the data for this analysis applying Goddard and Wierzbicka (2014) Approach of analysis. The following sub-sections show the road map for this research.

1.1. Problem Statement

Semantic primes are significant markers which constitute the core items in every world language. Studies on semantic primes in MSA are rare. This paper is an attempt to explicate them in *The Swing* short story in detail, with the hope that they are investigated thoroughly.

1.2 Hypothesis of the Study

This paper hypothesizes that semantic primes are encoded in MSA in most of their types through certain markers. These markers testify the hypothesis that world languages share certain sets in encoding their universality.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The current research aims at showing the minimum sets of words that MSA share with other world languages as a proof to the universality of language(s). It supports the claims that there is a universal grammar/language universals that most of world languages share, and there are certain minimum set of semantic primes abundant in most world languages.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will prove that MSA, as a universal language, has certain mechanisms for encoding sematic primes. This will boil down to bridging the gap of intercultural communication among speakers/learners of different languages, MSA is an example.

1.5. Method and Procedures

The data used in this study is extracted from the short story, *The Swing*. The data are investigated using Goddard and Wierzbicka Approach of Semantic Primes.

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1.6 Research Objectives

This study aims to show that semantic primes exist in MSA, and to prove that MSA has certain markers and/or mechanisms that indicate them in most of their types.

1.7. Research Questions

The study raises the following question:

1. How are semantic primes in MSA represented in the short story, *The Swing*?

1.8 Limits of the Study

The study is limited to investigating semantic primes in MSA, as evident in the short story, *The Swing*.

2. Literature Review

In her work on the Natural Semantic Metalanguage, Wierzbicka (1972) argued that there exists a minimum indefinable and indecomposable set of lexical vocabulary that is shared by world languages. This set of words/expressions is called "semantic primes". Similarly, Goddard, a colleague of Wierzbicka co-authored books, articles and research on the same area. The result has been an extensive work on the literature of semantic primes in world languages.

Du Bartell (2006) used the semantic primes to survey the development of the Spanish word "crisis" over time, and how this word changes its meaning in a paper titled "The development of a key word The deictic field of Spanish *crisis*".

Peeters et al. (2006) investigated the components of semantic primes, such as substantives, quantifiers, quantifiers, descriptors explicating the relationship between the Natural Semantic Metalanguage exponents and the universal grammar in Romance languages like Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

Amberber (2008) applied semantic primes to Amharic, a Semitic language spoken in Ethiopia, where he confirmed that most of them conform to Amharic, with special variation in the polysemous use of some words like "more". The importance of this study lies in the fact that the semantic and syntactic properties of NSM semantic primes constituted no barriers when applied to Amharic.

Chappell (2015) conducted a study on the relationship between universal syntax and Standard Mandarin Chinese, where he depended on data extracted from educated native Mandarin speakers. Chappell used semantic primes as instances of language universals and applied them to the selected data.

El-Daly (2017) demonstrated the use of semantic primes from a pragmatic perspective in a paper titled "Semantic Primes in Political Communication: Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump Final Presidential Debate". In this work, the researcher conducted a statistical analysis of the semantic primes numbers of occurrences in the data. She concluded that both candidates use the semantic primes to convey their messages, with similarities and differences in explicating the meanings behind these messages (p.285).

Holden (2019) debated the problematic uses of some semantic primes in Denesųłine, one of the native languages spoken in the Athabaskan region in Northern Canada. He concluded that some semantic primes such as "be (somewhere), "bad", "moment", "feel", "kind", and "part" are difficult to encode in the Denesųłine

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language, and the use of Natural Semantic Metalanguage can be a useful tool for documenting them.

When it comes to Arabic, studies are relatively rare; the only available studies (as far as the Worldwide Web is concerned) are a single page on semantic primes in Arabic with their English equivalents by AlBader (2016), and a paper by Dendenne (2017). Dendenne investigates the use of semantic primes in English and Arabic from a speech act view using a cultural script approach. Semantic primes dig deep in the syntax and semantics of language; this premise should be investigated and surveyed thoroughly in MSA, and this is the main goal of this study.

3. Semantic Primes: An Overview

In the early 1970s, Wierzbicka originated the linguistic theory of The Natural Semantic Metalanguage. This work was a mutual collaboration with her colleagues, editors and students (Goddard and Wierzbicka,2004: 153). This theory states that "all natural languages share a common core and a universal grammar and a small set of conceptual primes (simple lexicons)" (Wierzbicka, 1985) and "each meaning of a concept created in a natural language can be represented using a set of atomic terms- so-called universal semantic primes" Wierzbicka (1996). The main tenet behind this theory is that there exists a shared "mini-vocabulary and a mini-grammar" among all world languages which can help explicate the universality of languages and cultures and the ways they encode their similarities and/or differences (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2007: 109; Holden,2019: 118). Similarly, Goddard (1997: 197) asserts that all languages share an irreducible core which consists of a set of universal semantic primitives with certain universal combinatorial (i.e. syntactic) properties, and this set is "indefinable and irreducible (Goddard, 2003: 13; Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2004: 154).

Goddard and Wierzbicka (2007: 107-108) postulate that these semantic primitives constitute a small set of basic concepts which are indicated by "words and word-like elements available in all languages and have universal characteristics". These Semantic Primes are 65 in number (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2014: 12; Peeters, 2020). These "core words" can be used as a "survival kit" to be used by language users in any situation (McCarthy, 1990: 49). This same idea is latent in what (Widdowson 1983: 92-5) calls "procedural vocabulary".

To fully explicate the idea of semantic primes, Goddard and Wierzbicka (2007: 106 -7) argue that:

> For over 30 years, Anna Wierzbicka and colleagues have been seeking to identify an ultimate core vocabulary - a vocabulary of simple basic concepts or "semantic primes" - using a single criterion: reductive paraphrase. They have been attempting to discover, by trial and error lexical-conceptual analysis, the smallest set of basic concepts in terms of which all other words and concepts can be explicated; literally, "the simplest lexis of paraphrase and explanation".

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From the above quotation, it is evident that semantic primes serve as a "mini-language" which "can be used as a kind of conceptual lingua franca for investigating and explaining meanings across languages and cultures, as well as within any single language and culture" (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2007: 109). Thus, semantic primes constitute the smallest possible sets of vocabulary which have an indefinable word-meaning and can be identified in all natural languages" (Goddard, 2008; Wierzbicka, 2014; Fähndrich et al., 2014). As Sadow and Mullan (2020) contend, they are "cross-translatable and culture-neutral".

4. Semantic Primes in *The Swing*

The following is a practical investigation of Goddard and Wierzbicka (2014) Approach of semantic primes on the short story, *The Swing*. The explanation comprises semantic primes in MSA with their English exponents. The following table depicts the examples and types of semantic primes in MSA (in bold) with their English exponents (between brackets):

MSA Semantic Primes with English Equivalents

ʔANA (I~ME),**ʔANTA/ʔANTUM** (YOU), **ŠAχŠUN MAA** (SOMEONE), **ŠAY?UN/ʔAḤADUN MAA** /(SOMETHING~THING), **NAAS** (PEOPLE), **JASAD** (BODY)	substantives
ʔANWAA' (KINDS), **ʔAJZAAʔ** (PARTS)	relational substantives
HAAðA (THIS), **NAFS** (THE SAME), **ʔAAχar**, (OTHER~ELSE)	determiners
WAAḤID (ONE), **ʔIθNAAN** (TWO), **BA'ḍ** (SOME), **KUL** (ALL), **KAθIIR** (MUCH~MANY), **QALIIL** (LITTLE~FEW)	quantifiers
JAYYID (GOOD), **SAYYIʔ** (BAD)	evaluators
KABIIR (BIG), **SAGIIR** (SMALL)	descriptors
YA'LAM (KNOW), YUFAKKIR, Y (THINK), **YURIID** (WANT**), LA YA'LAM** (DON'T WANT), **YAŠ'UR** (FEEL), **YARA** (SEE), **YASMA'** (HEAR)	mental predicates
YAQUUL (SAY), **KALIMAAT** (WORDS), **ṢAḤIIḤ (TRUE)**	speech
YAF'AL (DO), **YAḤDUθ** (HAPPEN), **YATAḤARRAK** (MOVE)	actions, events, movement

YAKUUNU (BE), FI MAKAANIN MA (SOMEWHERE), YUJAD (THERE IS), **MULK/χAAṢṢA** (BE SOMEONE)'S (BE), **ŠAXṢUN MAA/ŠAY?UN MAA,** BE (SOMEONE/SOMETHING)	location, existence, specification
YA'IIŠ (LIVE), **YAMUUT** (DIE)	
WHEN~TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT	time
?AYNA (WHERE~PLACE), **HUNA** (HERE), **FAWQ** (ABOVE), **TAḦT,** (BELOW), **BA'IID** (FAR), **QARIIB** (NEAR), **JAANIB** (SIDE),**DAAχIL** (INSIDE), **YALMIS** (TOUCH)	place
LAMM/LANN (NOT), **RUBBAMA** (MAYBE), **YASTAṬII'** (CAN), **LI?ANNA/?IðA** (BECAUSE),**?INN** (IF)	logical concepts
JIDDAN (VERY), **?AKθAR** (MORE)	intensifier, augmentor
MIθL (LIKE/WAY), **KA** (AS)	similarity

*Notes: 1. Goddard and Wierzbicka (2014: 12 state that "primes exist as the meanings of lexical units (not at the level of lexemes). 2. Exponents of primes may be words, bound morphemes, or phrasemes. 3. They can have combinatorial variants or "allolexes" (indicated with˜). 5. Each prime has well-specified syntactic (combinatorial) properties".

The following section is a practical investigation of semantic primes in MSA with their English equivalents as encoded in the short story, The Swing, following Goddard and Wierzbicka's Approach (2014).

4.1 Substantives: (I, YOU, SOMEONE, PEOPLE, SOMETHING/THING, BODY)

4.1.1 ?ana (I-ME), ?anta/?antum (YOU)

Substantives are represented by the pronouns *?ana*, (I), *?anta/,?anti*/ and *?antum* (YOU). In MSA, the pronoun, "you" can refer to singular, dual, and plural cases. The forms also distinguish masculine and feminine forms respectively. The following examples demonstrate this point.

1. ?ana qaadimun min hunaak

   I –IMP-come from there
   I'm coming from there.
2. Kayfa ?anti ya Halima?

   Quest-how DUAL-you Halima?
   How are you Halima?
3. ?ayna ?antum al?aan?

   Quest-where PL-you-be now?

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Where are you now?

4.1.2 ?aḥadun (SOMEONE)

The examples of the semantic primes of substantives are reflected by the words *šaχṣun maa* (SOMEONE) and *?aḥadun* ((SOMEBODY) as two variants in MSA:

4. Wa lam yahuzzani ?aḥadun kaðaalik

NEG. sway me somebody (nobody/no one) as well
No one swayed me as well.

4.1.1.3 Šay?un maa (SOMETHING)

Another example of the semantic prime of substantives is the word *šay?an*, translated into English as "SOMETHING", which is evident in the following example:

5. Da'ni uqaddimu laka šay?an

IMP-let SING. me present SING you something
Let me present you something.

4.1.4 Naas (PEOPLE)

"PEOPLE" as a semantic prime of substantives is demonstrated by the word "naas" in the short story:

6. Kullul-naas yaṣbaḥuna fi yawmin ma junuudan.

All-IMP-people become someday soldiers
All people become soldiers one day.

4.1.5 Jasad (BODY)

The semantic prime of "BODY" has its exponent in MSA entailed in the words (jasad) ans (badan).In the short story, *The Swing*, the word (jasad) is encoded in the example below:

7. Wa ḥaawala ?an yahizza jasadaha biqadamayhi

And he PERF-try to sway her body with his feet
And he tried to sway her body with his feet.

4.2 Relational Substantives: KIND, PARTS

KIND and PARTS are universal relational substantive semantic primes. The SP "PARTS" (?anwaa') is not mentioned, while the word "juz?" (PART) is indicated by the sentence below:

8. ?ara juz?an minu

I-IMP-see part of it
I see a part of it.

4.3 Determiners: THIS,THE SAME, OTHER˜ELSE

4.3.1 Haaða (This)

The determiner "THIS" as a SP is encoded by the word "haaða":

9. ?innahu yamliku haatha ?al'adadil-kabiiri minal-tuyuuri

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IMP-he has this number huge of birds
He has this huge number of birds.

4.3.2 Nafs (SAME). This SP is encoded in the following sentence, where the word *nafs* is a representative of the SP "SAME":

10.?ana wa huwa fi nafsil-wiḥdati

IMP-I and he be in same the unit
He and I are in the same unit.

4.3.3 ?aaχar/?uχraa (OTHER)

As for the determiner "OTHER", it is indicated by the words ?aaχar/?uχraa) in the short story. The forms and uses of this SP s are language specific in MSA:

11.Ques. ?ayyati ḥaqiibah?

Which bag?
Tilka fi ?alḍaffatil-?uχra
PLACE-there in the other bank
There in the <u>other</u> bank.

4.4 Quantifiers: ONE,TWO, SOME, ALL, MUCH,˜ANY,LITTLE,˜FEW

4.4.1 Waḥid (ONE) and ?iθnaan (TWO)

As exponents of SP of quantifiers, the words *waḥid* (ONE) and *?iθnaan* (TWO) are encoded in the following examples:

12.wa tatafattatu ramaadan fi ?iḥda ḥarakaati ?a'ḍaa?iha ?amutmahila

IMP-and crumble ashes in one of motion POS. organs slow
And it crumbles in <u>one</u> of its organs' slow motions.
Wa θalaathi naχlaat tawilaat, rubiṭat bayna ?iθnayni minha ?urjuḥa
And three date-palms tall, PERF-tie between two of them a swing

And three tall date-palm trees where a swing was tied between two of them.

4.4.2 Ba'ḍ (SOME): The word "ba'ḍ" as an exponent of the word (SOME) in indicated in the following example:

13.Wa raġaba ?an ?ajliba ma?i ba?ḍa θimaaral-bambar

PERF- and he-like bring with me some fruit of mulberry
And he liked to bring him some mulberry fruit.

4.4.3 Kul (ALL): In MSA, the English word *all* can be represented by "kul" or "jamii". In the data under investigation, it is represented by the exponent "kull", as in the below example:

14.Kullul-naas yaṣbaḥuna fi yawmin ma junuudan.

All-IMP-people become someday soldiers
All people become soldiers one day.

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4.4.4 Kaθiir (MUCH/ MANY): The words (**MUCH/ MANY**) in MSA are indicated by The exponent "kaθiir". MSA does not differentiate between countable and uncountable forms as in English. They normally appears before the head noun:

15.?aladaykum ?anhaarun kaθiiratan hunaak?

Quest-IMP-you-Pl have rivers many there?
Do you have many rivers there?

4.4.5 Qaliil (LITTLE/FEW): The exponent of the semantic prime**s** (LITTLE/FEW) in MSA is expressed by the word "qaliil". This word is subject to morphological changes according to the rules of MSA, as in the following example:

16.Taḥarrakitil-ḥibaali qaliilan fa qaliilan

PERF-move the ropes little by little
The ropes moved little by little.

4.5 Evaluators: GOOD, BAD

Evaluators in MSA are encoded by the words "jayyid" (GOOD) and "sayyi?" (BAD) as exponents of SPs. The exponent "sayyi?" (BAD) does not appear in the short story, *The Swing*. This does not mean that they do not exist in in MSA:

17.Kaanat daf'atun jayyidah

PERF-be push good
It was a good push.

4.6 Descriptors: Kabiir, Ṣaġiir (BIG, SMALL)

Descriptors in are encoded by the words "kabiir" (BIG) and "sagiir" (SMAII) in MSA; they normally appear before the head word, as in the following two examples:

18.Lam ?ataṣawwar ?annahu yamliku haaðal-'adadil-kabiiri minal- ṭiyuur

PERF-I-NEG-imagine he has this number huge of birds.
I didn't imagine that he has this huge number of birds.

19.?alḥaqiibatul- ṣaġiirah? Kayfa tasa'u jasadihi?
IMPERF-bag small? QUES-how carry his body?
The small bag? How can it carry his body?

4.7. Mental Predicates: KNOW, THINK,WANT, DON'T WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR

The following verbs, "ya'rif/ya'lam" (KNOW), "yaðin" (THINK), "yuriid" (WANT), "yaš'ur" (FEEL), and "yara" (SEE) are representatives of mental predicates SPs in MSA.

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4.7.1 Know (Ya'rif)

20 ?ata'riful-sibaaḥati?

IMP-Quest- know swimming?
Dow you know how to swim?
Na'am ?a'rif.
IMP-yes I know
Yes, I know.

4.7.2 Yađin (THINK)

21.Kaana yađinnu ?annahu naḍaj

PERF-be think-he it –be ripe
He thought it was ripe.

4.7.3 Yuriid (WANT)

22.Baaba yuriiduni ?an ?uqabbiluka

Dad IMPER-want me to kiss PL-you
(My) dad wants me to kiss you.

4.7.4 Yaš'ur (FEEL)

23.ša'ara bil-ġafwil-jamiil

PERF-feel the snooze nice
He felt the nice snooze.

4.7.5 Yara

24.?araahu yaχriju minal-ḥaqiibati hunaak

IMPERF-see I come out (of) the bag there
I see him coming out of the bag there.

4.7.6 (Yasma' (HEAR)

25.Kaanal-fata la yasma'u ṣawtan

PERF-be the boy NEG-hear a sound
The boy didn't hear (any) sound.

4.8 Speech: SAY,WORDS,TRUE

Speech is encoded by the words "yaquul" (SAY), "kalimaat" (WORDS) and "sahiih" (TRUE). These SPs are subject morphological changes according to the grammatical rules governing them.

4.8.1 Yaquul (SAY)

26.Qaalat Halima, ?ana la ?uḥibbu θamriha

PERF-say Halima I IMP.NEG-like POS. its fruit
Halima said he doesn't like its fruit.

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27.Qaalatil jaddatuha: ?innaha la tanṭiqul-kalimmati ṣaḥiiḥatan
PERF-say her grandmother she NEG. pronounce the words correctly
Her grandmother said she couldn't pronounce the words correctly.

4.9. Actions, Events, Movement, Contact: DO, HAPPEN, MOVE,TOUCH

These semantic primes are indicated by the verbs "DO" (yaf'al), "HAPPEN" (yahduthu), and "MOVE" (yataḥarrak). The SP "Do" is not included in the data:

4.9.1 Yaḥdiθ (HAPPEN)

28.Yaḥduθu ðaalika liman yasbaḥ
IMPERF-happen that to anyone swimming
That happens to any one swimming.

4.9.2 Yataḥarrak (MOVE)

29.Wa ?aṣbaḥal-fata yataḥarraku 'ala qimamil-naχiili.
PERF-become the boy move on tops of date-palm trees
And the boy became to move on the tops of date-palm trees.

4.10 Location, Existence, Possession, Specification: BE (SOMEWHERE), THERE IS, BE (SOMEONE)'S, BE (SOMEONE/SOMETHING)

These SPs are expressed by the words/expressions "There is" (yujad), "Be Somewhere" (yakuunu fi makaanin maa), "Be Someone's", "Someone" (Šaχsun maa), and "Something" (Šay?un maa):

4.10.1. Yakuunu fi makaanin maa (BE SOMEWHERE)

30 Wa kaanal- ḥamaamu yuhalliqu fi sama?il-bayti
And PERF-be pigeons PROG-fly in sky of the house
And the pigeons were flying in the sky of the house.

4.10.2 Yujad (THERE IS)

31 Wa kaana duχaanun χafiifun ramadi ya'qibu ?alsinati lahabil-tannuuri
And PERF-be smoke thick gray following tongues flames of furnace
And there was thick gray smoke following the flames of the furnace.

4.10.3 Mulk/χaaṣṣa: BE (SOMEONE)'S: in MSA, the SP of possession is normally represented by placing a suffix to the noun(s), which indicates the possessor(s) number and gender(s), as in the following example:

32 ?a haaðihi ḥaqiibatahu?
IMPER-QUEST-be POS.his bag?
Is this his bag?

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33 Haaðihi? La, ḥaqiibat

This? No, it's my bag.

4.10.3 Yakuunu Šaχsun maa (BE SOMEONE)

34. Kaana 'Aliyyun yasbaḥu fil-nahri.
PERF-be Ali PROG.-swim in the river.
Ali was swimming in the river.

4.10.4 Yakuunu Šay?un maa (BE SOMETHING)

35. Kaana jidaaral- ṭiini yaḥjizu ?arḍan munχafiḍatan
PERF-be wall of clay PROG-shut land low
The clay wall was shutting a low land.

4.11 Life and Death: The SPs pertaining to life and death are indicated by the words, namely the verbs, "LIVE" (yaḥya/ya'iišu) and "DIE" (yamuutu); they do not appear in the data under investigation. Again, this does not mean that they do not exist in MSA; they appear in different types of texts.

4.12 Time: There are 8 words/expressions that encode the SPs of time. These are: "mataa" (WHEN), "al?aan" (NOW), "qabla" (BEFORE), "ba'da" (AFTER), "waqtin tawiil" (A LONG TIME), "waqtin qaṣiir" (A SHORT TIME),"liba'ḍil-waqti" (FOR SOME TIME), and laḥđa (MOMENT). Some of these exponents are not mentioned in the data; they include (li/ba'ḍ and laḥđa).The following examples represent the uses of the semantic primes of time and place in the short story, *The Swing*:

4.12.1 Mataa (WHEN ˜TIME)

36. Wamata sayaḥṣalu ?ibni 'ala ?ijaazah?
IMPER-and when FUT-get POS. my son a leave?
And when will my son get a leave?

4.12.2 Al?aan (NOW)

37. Hizni ?al?aan
IMPER-sway OBJ.me now
Sway me (right) now.

4.12.3 Qabla (BEFORE)

38. Wa ṭalaba minha ?an tahizzahuma qabla ?an taṣ'ad ?ilal- ṣaṭḥi.
PERF-ask her to way DUAL-sway before she IMPER-go up the roof
And he asked her to sway them before she goes up the roof.

4.12.4 Ba'da (AFTER)

39. Wa talaqqa jasadiha ba'da ?an raji'at ?ilayhi.

And he PERF-catch her body after she returned to him
And he caught her body after she returned to him.

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4.12.5WAQTI ṬAWĪIL (A LONG TIME)

40. Wa marrat muddatun ṭawiila min duun ?an yaktiba lana risaalah
And PEFR-pass time long without he IMPERF-write to us a letter
And a long time passed without writing us a letter.

4.13 Space: The exponents indicating the semantic primes of space/place are "where-place" (?ayna-makaan), "here" (huna), "above" (fawq), "below" (taḥta), "far" (ba'iid), "near" (qariib), "side" (jaanib), "inside" (daaχil), and "touch" (yalmis). The following examples depict their uses in the data:

4.13.1 ?ayna (WHERE˜PLACE)

41. Ayna ?antum ?al?aan?
Quest.where be PL.you now?
Where are you now?

4.13.2 Huna (HERE)

42. Sa?atrukul-darraajata huna.
I FUT-leave the bike here.
I will leave the bike here.

4.13.3 FAWQ (ABOVE)

43. Lamma đahara fawqal-maa?i ?aṭlaqa min famihi ?almaa?.
When-PERF-appear above the water, he threw from his mouth the water
When he appeared above the water's surface, he threw the water from his mouth.

4.13.4.TAḤTA (BELOW)

44. Yuḥarriku yadayhi taḥta jasadihi
IMPERF-move POS.hands below POS.body
He's moving his hands below his body.

4.13.5BA'IID (FAR)S

45. lamaḥa ġayra ba'iiḍatan 'anha naaran taltahibu fil-tannurin
PERF-glance NEG. far from her fire burning in the furnace
He glanced, not away from her, fire burning in the furnace.

4.13.6. Qariib (NEAR)

46. Wa qaalat Halima: huna qurbal-maa?.
And PERF-say Halima: here near the water
And Halima said: "Here near the water".

4.13.7Jaanib (SIDE)

47. Nađarat Halima ?ilal-zaa?iri bijaanibi 'aynayha
PERF-look Halima at the visitor near her eyes
Halima looked at the visitor beside her eyes.

4.13.8Daaχil: (INSIDE)

48. Wa 'allaqaha daaχilil-?aġṣaanil kaθiifati
And PERF-hang it inside the branches thick
And he hanged it inside the thick branches.

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4.13.9 (Yalmis (TOUCH)

49. Kaana bistiṭaa'atihi ?an yamissa qaa'al-nahri biqadamayhi
PERF-can touch the bottom of the river with his feet
He could touch the bottom of the river with his feet.

4.14 Logical concepts: The words "NOT" (lamm/lann), "MAYBE"(rubbama),"CAN" (yastatii'),"BECAUSE" (li?anna), and "IF" (?iða/?inn) are exponents of logical concepts SPs. They are represented by the following examples:

4.14.1LAMM/LANN (NOT)

50. Lamm yamissul-zaa?ir ?urhuḥatiha
NEG-PERF-touch the visitor her swing
The visitor did not touch her swing.

4.14.2RUBBAMA (MAYBE)

51. Rubbama fil- šahril-llaði qad ya?ti
Maybe in the month which may come
Maybe in the next month.

4.14.3Yastaṭii' (CAN)

52.?a?staṭii'u hazzakuma?
QUEST.IMPERF-can DUAL PL. sway you?
Can I sway you?

4.14.4Li?anna (BECAUSE)

53. Tađaahari bil-nawmi… li?annahu la yuhibbu ġayril-niyaami kal-mawtaa
IMPER-pretend- be sleeping because IMPERF-NEG like except sleeping like the dead
Pretend to be sleeping because he doesn't like (anyone) except the sleepers who look like the dead.

If (?IðA/?INN)

54. Hal ġaaṣa fil-maa?i? la wa?illa iχtanaqa ?iða ma baqiya ṭawiilan taḥatal-maa?i
QUES-have he dive in the water? No. Or he would choke if he stay long under the water?
Has he dived in the water? No. Or he would choke if he stayed long under the water?

4.15 Intensifier/Augmentor: Augmentors and/or intensifiers are encoded by the words "very" (jiddan) and "more" (kaθiir/?akθar), as in the following examples from the short story:

4.15.1 Kaθiir/?akθar (VERY/MORE)

55.?aladaykum ?anhaarun kaθiirah?

Do you have more rivers there?

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56. …?alḥayaatul-?akθaru ġumuuḍan
N. the life AUG-more mystery
The more (most) mysterious life.

14.16 Similarity: The words "LIKE" (miθl) and "AS" (ka?anna) are representatives/exponents of the category of similarity as a SP in the data:

14.16.1 Miθl (LIKE)

57. Ladayhi ḥaqiibatun miθluha
IMPERF-have he a bag like it
He has a bag like it.

14.16.2 Ka?anna (AS)

58. Bila ra?sin……. kal-duχaan
With no head…..as smoke

59. ?inđuri ?ilay, ka?anni huwal-?allaði yasbaḥu wa yuhaadiθukil-?aan
IMPER-look at me as if he (be) who swim and talk to SING.you now
Look at me as if he's the one who's talking to you now.

5. Conclusion

Semantic Primes of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach (NSM) are minimum lexical sets shared by world languages; they constitute an important part of the universals and universality of world languages. The study has investigated semantic primes in MSA as encoded in the short story, *The Swing*. These semantic primes are encoded by a number of lexical words/expressions. Some of these primes are expressed by one that one form according to the specificity of the language- MSA is no exception. The study has also showed that some semantic primes do not appear in the short story, *The Swing*; this does not signify that they do not exist in MSA**.** The study can be used as a helpful tool for comparing MSA with other world languages for the aim of facilitating intercultural communication among world languages in a variety of real-life contexts/situations. The study has dealt with semantic primes from a syntactic and semantic point of view. More research could be done on surveying semantic primes in other texts from different linguistic perspectives to see how they are encoded in different contexts.

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