



A Semantic Analysis to Lewis Carroll's Novel *Alice in Wonderland*

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Abstract

This semantic study is an attempt to analyze *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll. Being a logician, Lewis Carroll must have been an enthusiastic investigator of the semantic phenomena in language. His works provide an insight into the issues of meaning, the consequences of word play and ambiguity in the creation of humor. Following this tendency, the researcher examines the concepts of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations and aims at shedding light on the way they operate to trigger laughter. Consequently, the researcher strives to answer the questions; what are the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations used in the story, how these relations are used by the writer to form the language of the story, and to what extent humor is achieved by the use of these semantic relations. The research uses a qualitative and descriptive method. First, it describes the types of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations and then identifies these relations in the novel. Based on the analysis of the data, it is concluded that Carroll used collocation, idiom, and proverb on the syntagmatic plane and synonymy, antonym, hyponymy, homonymy, and polysemy on the paradigmatic plane to produce humorous effect.

Keywords: Semantics, Syntagmatic relation, Paradigmatic relation, Word play, Humor.

1. Introduction

This paper sets out to examine the use of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations in the comical instances retrieved from the novel *Alice in Wonderland*. It was written by the well-known English author Lewis Carroll to his young friend Alice Liddell. It tells how Alice dreams and follows a White Rabbit down a rabbit-hole to a world where she meets famous characters such as the Duchess and the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter and the March Hare, the King and Queen of Hearts, and the Mock Turtle. Carroll skillfully mixes various kinds of wordplay to make the story stand out and offers the reader something to think about and reflect. Throughout the text, Carroll makes jokes and creates various meanings of the terms and some attention-grabbing riddles. As it is known, everything is possible in Wonderland and Carroll's operation of language reflects this sense of boundless possibility.

This paper aims to examine the use of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations in the comical instances retrieved from *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll. It tries to answer the tackled questions: What are the relationships in the language system? How paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations operate in establishing the language of the story? To what extent humor is achieved by the use of these semantic relations?

The focus of this paper is based on the relations in the language system and how it is projected in the novel *Alice in Wonderland*. First, general background information about selected semantic concepts related to the field of the analysis is provided. In addition to that, the language of humor is explained through which Carroll tried to achieve with his jokes and wordplay. Secondly, the paper is proceeded by picking up different sections from Carroll's text and analyzing them. Finally, summery conclusion followed by references end the article.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Semantics

Semantics “mark, sign” is defined by Fred West (1975) as the study of the relationship between symbol and meaning. He says that human beings use the symbolic process in their speech that is they have to identify certain symbols to represent other things. So, they communicate symbolically and people have to agree on what the symbols stand for. Szubko talks about intrinsic relations that exist in the mental lexicon and says that items are linked in the human word-store through at least one component of the fourfold information on a word-meaning, morphology, syntax, or phonology. So, Lexical items can be intrinsically related through their meaning. A word is tied with its hyponym (duck, bird), co-hyponyms (duck, goose), near-synonyms (wide-broad) antonyms (wide, narrow). All these interrelated links form a network called a semantic link (2015).

From the representation of meaning in the human mind, one can realize that there are various relations between words like intrinsic relations and associative relations. Intrinsic relations are associated with semantic relations; the meanings of the words are related, morphological relations, and phonological relations like words with the same initials. Regarding associative meaning, there might not be any direct relation between the words but their occurrence together in the language makes them be related and connected.

2.2 Relations in the Language System

The language system is governed by syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations. Paradigm and syntagm are types of lexical relations that reveal different kinds of relationships within a lexical field.

The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure put emphasis on that language is a system of signs. To Saussure, a sign consists of two parts: a form, the set of things to which the sign refers and perceptible is known as (signifier) and an idea, the concept evoked in mind and not perceptible is called (signified), and the association between these two parts is arbitrary (Ducrot and Todorov, 1979). It means that a certain sign can have different meanings without any trouble, or they can be related to a different expression (Culler, 1986).

Thus meaning can be produced in two ways. The first one is called syntagm; that is a set of linguistic forms in a linear syntactic relationship. Sometimes it is called ‘construction’ which refers to the relation between a sign and other signs that come after or before them in sequence. It is contrasted with the second one; a paradigm which refers to the relation between a sign and other signs in the language, its sense relations, that creates meaning (Aarts, Chalker and Weiner, 2014). Linguistic signs, lexemes, belong together along two intersecting and overlapping dimensions. According to Saussure, the coiner of the terms, the horizontal relationships between linguistic units are described as syntagmatic while the ones on the vertical dimension as paradigmatic. As a result, his approach contributes to two essential notions of structural linguistics known as syntagm and paradigm (Crystal, 1994).

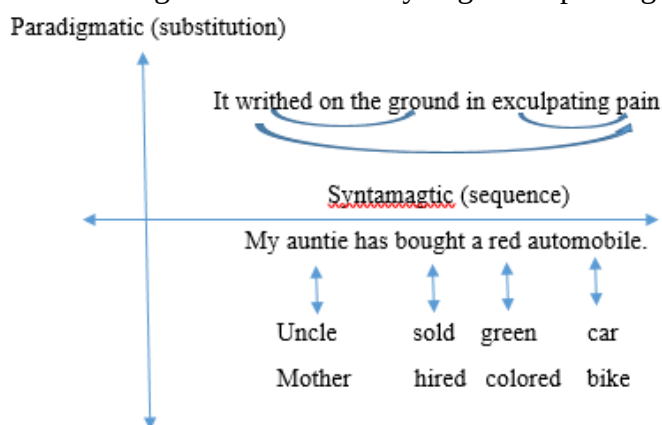


Figure (1) Relations in The Language System



It should be borne in mind that the term syntagm etymologically means combinatorial and is interrelated with syntax. It means that it is related to grammar, as words on the syntagmatic axis are assembled and ordered according to the grammatical rules (Lyons, 1981). As it is represented by the horizontal line in (figure 1), on the horizontal dimension, the meanings of the constituents are combined to produce the meaning of the syntagm completely. There is a certain mutual compatibility between the constituents of the sentence *It writhed on the ground in exculpating pain*. That is to say, according to linguistic knowledge, one can expect that *exculpating* can occur with *pain* or *agony* but not with *joy* or *ignorance*. Thus, the units are in a syntagmatic relationship with each other and can be analyzed in terms of syntactic form. Similarly, *writhed* and *agony* frequently come together. Thus, horizontal expectancies of this kind can be identified as collocations, we can say *exculpating* collocates with *pain*. They do also occur in idioms and proverbs (Crystal, 1994).

Regarding Saussure's approach displayed in figure (1), paradigmatic relations are shown on the vertical dimension. It is obvious that one lexeme can substitute for another, and relate to it in meaning. In the sentence *My auntie has bought a red automobile*, one can focus on lexemes one by one, and replace them. Therefore, *bought* can be replaced by a synonym such as *purchased* since they are similar in meaning. It can also be exchanged by an antonym such as *sold* since they are contrasted in meaning. Likewise, it is allowed to substitute *automobile* by a hyponym such as *Ford* since it has the more specific meaning, or by one of more general meaning 'a hypernym' such as *vehicle*. Here, it is permissible to expect and assess the meaning relations between the terms which are called sense relations (Crystal, 1994).

2.3 Syntagmatic Relations

It includes collocation, idiom, and proverb.

2.3.1 Collocation

Collocation is one of the relations that results from the way words occur in sequence. The term is introduced by the British Linguist J. R. Firth that refers to words which occur together consistently, as in; *smoked salmon, comb my hair* (Aarts, Chalker and Weiner, 2014). Thus, the presence of one word affects the occurrence of the other, for example, in the sentence *It was a very auspicious* – one might expect words like *occasion* or *event*. Crystal (2006) points out an aspect of collocation that might be used as a base for jokes and word play to make humorous impression such as using an unexpected word in the example given above, *It was a very auspicious bottle of wine*.

2.3.2 Idioms

Idioms are defined as expressions in language that do not obey the common rules of building meaning from word to word. They are counted as single lexical items though they are more extensive than single words (Hazen, 2015).

Trask (1999) defines idiom as an expression whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meanings of its constituent parts. They have fixed meanings which must be learned without considering the meanings of the individual words. For example, in *let the cat out of the bag*, one cannot guess the idiomatic meaning of the expression, even if the meaning of the individual words is known. Hence, no words in the expression suggest that '*let the cat out of the bag*' means '*to reveal something publicly which is supposed to be a secret*'. One more point worth mentioning is made by Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2003) that idioms break the rules of semantic properties which leads to humor, for example, the word *eat* requires an object with the semantic property *edible* but in '*eat your heart out*' which means '*to feel irresistible sorrow, jealousy, or grieve*', this restriction is disrupted and makes it sound funny, as in:

1-What did the doctor tell the vegetarian about his surgically implanted heart valve from a pig?



2- That it was okay as long as he didn't "eat his heart out"

The humorous effects produced by idioms make the idioms last longer due to their vivid meaning like *lipstick on a pig* which makes a humorous image because of the contrast. The meaning is that a bad situation is bad, regardless of how someone tries to make it look better (Hazen, 2015).

2.3.3 Proverbs

The word proverb comes from the Latin term *proverbium* with the meaning of an "old saying" "adage" or "proverb". The word *proverbium* has been modified into English language to mean "a short, pithy, rhythmical saying expressing a general belief. It can be expressed in terms of dictums, maxims, mottoes, and truisms (Crystal, 1994).

Norrick defines proverbs as "self-contained, pithy, traditional, expressions with didactic content and fixed, poetic form (1985). Self – contained means that their grammatical units cannot be replaced by other units. The word pithy means that they have fixed poetic forms full of meaning or as Norrick claimed *pregnant in meaning*. They are also traditional because they are part of folklore and contain wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional perspectives related to our everyday thoughts, feelings and needs. Finally, by *didactic*, Norrick means that proverbs are intended to teach people something, moral lessons, rules, advice, warning, encouragement and some truth about experience.

Crystal (1994) believes that their effectiveness lies in a simple grammatical structure. They are characterized by their vivid appearance and domestic references which makes them comprehensible. They are also effortlessly committed to memory since they contain alliteration, rhythm, and rhyme. For example, *Enough is enough*. It means that enough of something is sufficient or not to continue doing something (Manser, 2007).

2.4 Paradigmatic Relations

It includes synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, homonymy, and polysemy.

2.4.1 Synonymy

Synonymy is used to mean 'sameness of meaning'. More than one word has the same meaning, or alternatively the same meaning is expressed by more than one word. The term synonymy is derived from Greek (syn- + -nymy) meaning 'same + name' (Crystal, 1994).

Furthermore, substitutability and interchangeability characterize synonyms in terms of a relation between word-concepts. Even a way of testing synonymy is substitution-substituting one word for another. For example:

1- I am afraid Mr. John is busy/occupied at the moment.

The words 'busy and occupied' in (1) are interchangeable in this sentence, but the words could not be substituted in (2):

2- I am afraid this seat is occupied.

I am afraid this seat is busy. *

From these examples, one can realize that real synonyms are rare in natural languages for they must have the same descriptive, expressive and social meaning. In fact, one word can express one meaning in a language. Thus, synonyms do exist in the language due to the fact that one word ought to express one meaning or a particular meaning. There might be no words which have exactly the same meaning. There is always a slight difference that separates them and makes them to be appropriate in some contexts and inappropriate in some other contexts (Crystal, 2003). Synonyms are said to be close in meaning. Therefore, three degrees of closeness can be identified:

1- Absolute Synonymy

Different linguists describe absolute synonymy by several terms such as exact, true, real, perfect, and strict synonymy. Total synonyms are perfectly identical in meaning. That is to say; two words are synonyms if and only if they can be used interchangeably in all contexts. This type of synonymy does not exist or hardly ever to be found. Occasionally, such



a synonymy is found between formal and informal vocabulary items like *rubella* is the term found in medical literature for the disease that is more generally known as *German measles* (Aitchison, 2003).

2- Partial Synonymy

Partial synonymy is the second type of synonymy. It is recognized by other terminologies like propositional or sense synonymy. Cruse labels this type of synonymy as cognitive synonymy and defines it as "x is a cognitive synonym of y, if y and x are syntactically identical" (1986:88). They include lexical items which are not perfectly identical in meaning, but they are of words that can substitute for each other in a sentence without changing its truth value. Consider these synonymous words *false* and *untrue*, in these sentences:

- 1- What he told me was *false*.
- 2- What he told me was *untrue*.

Thus, if sentence (1) is true, then sentence (2) is also true due to their sharing propositional synonyms.

3- Near Synonymy

It is the third and most common type of synonymy which is also known as (plesionym). Near synonyms share the common core of meaning but differ in relatively minor aspects (Cruse, 2006). It means that there is a slight difference in their meaning. One provides propositional information which does not exist in the other. In the sentence "*He was murdered, or rather, executed*" the words *murdered* and *executed* are near synonyms since they have mutual core of meaning, but *He was killed, or rather, deprived of life* is odd because there is no propositional difference (Aronoff and Rees-Miller, 2001).

2.4.2 Antonymy

The term "antonymy" is used in semantics to mean the oppositeness of meaning. That is to say, it encompasses words that demonstrate the opposite meanings. The term is derived from Greek (ant- + -nymy) meaning 'opposite + name' (Crystal, 1994). Further, it is one of the main and significant sense relations which is referred to as the relation of exclusion rather than inclusion. Cruse (2006) defines antonym and states that two words are antonyms if they express two opposite extremes out of a range of possibilities.

Palmer (1981) makes a further point that in each pair of antonyms as in: '*high* and *low*' one of the terms is marked and the other is unmarked. While asking or describing the degree of the gradable quality, we say *How high something is?* rather than saying *How low something is?* thus the term *high* used in the question is unmarked and *low* is the marked one.

However, adjectives can be considered as perfect examples of antonymy as *old/young*, *old/new*, *big/small*, *good/bad*, *light /dark*, *difficult/easy*; there are also antonym pairs of nouns like *war/peace*, *wife/husband*, verb antonym pairs like *encourage/ discourage*. Further, there are pairs of adverbs like *often/seldom*, *always/never*, *everywhere/nowhere* (Lobner, 2013). Finch (2005) distinguishes three types of antonymy:

1- Gradable Antonyms

Gradable antonyms are two ends on a scale. There is a set of gradations between the pairs. That is to say, the possibilities between the pairs are left open. It is not that if something is wide, then, it is not narrow, or if something is narrow, then it is not wide. There are other possibilities between the two main terms (Palmer, 1981). Also, *deep* and *shallow* are gradable antonyms since there are other possibilities between them that do not provide an absolute



scale. There are degrees of depth in the sense that the deeper a lake gets, the less shallow it is and vice versa (Bauer,2012).

2- Non- Gradable Antonyms

Non- gradable antonyms display incompatibility just like gradable antonyms but different in that there are only two of them in the set. (Palmer, 1981). It means that there are no intermediate terms between the main pairs. We choose one member and exclude the other. They provide an absolute value as in: *dead / alive, man / woman open / shut*. Linguists refer to this type using different terms, Leech (1974) refers to this type as binary taxonomy, Kempson (1977) describes such pairs as true antonyms.

3- Relational Antonym

Relational antonyms are pairs of words which show reversal relationship between items (Palmer,1981). It means that each member in a pair describes a relationship to the other. For example, the relation between *teacher* and *student*, *father* and *mother*, *doctor* and *patient* stand for the same event but from different perspectives. That is to say, if we suggest one member '*doctor*', we imply the existence of the other '*patient*'. They are also called converse terms (Bauer,2012).

2.4.3 Hyponymy

Hyponymy is one of the essential relations in analyzing the meaning of words. The term is derived from Greek, and it is two parts (hyp- + nymy) meaning 'under + name' (Crystal, 1994). Jackson (1988) defines hyponymy as a term which displays the hierarchical relationship between the meanings of words. It refers to a relation that classifies the words in which one meaning of a word is included within another one.

Logically speaking, hyponymy means an expression A is a hyponym of B if and only if the meaning of B is part of the meaning of A. Thus the more general term is called superordinate or hypernym, i.e above + name, and the more specific one, subordinate is the hyponym, i.e under + name (Al- Sulaiman,2016). In addition to that, when two or more words share the same hypernym, they are called co- hyponyms (Yule,1996). This hierarchical relationship can be best shown in the form of a tree diagram.

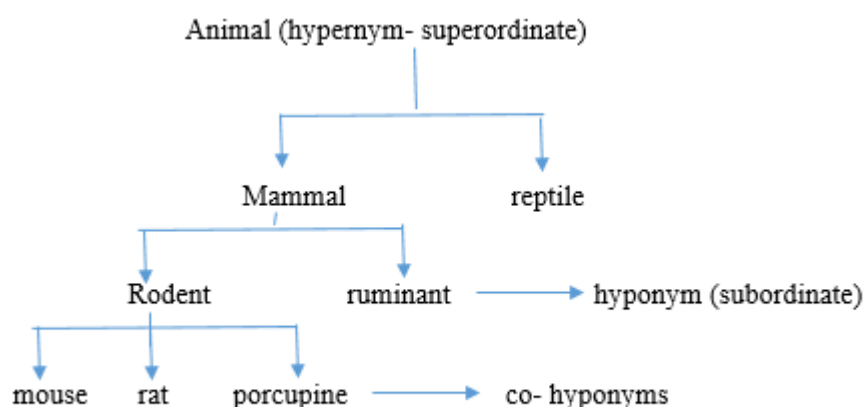


Figure (2) a homonymy tree for animals

In the tree diagram shown above, animal is the general term that possesses a semantic feature which exists in all its hyponyms, namely (*mouse, rat, porcupine*). Each of these co- hyponyms has a distinct semantic specification which is passed from one level to the next level of the classification. Since the relation is hierarchy, there are intervening levels of hyponymy, *mouse* is the hyponym of the *rodent* together with the co- hyponym of *rat*, whereas *rodent* is a hyponym of the more general term *mammal*, which is in turn becomes the hyponym of the superordinate term *animal* (Widdowson,1996).



Furthermore, hyponyms are said to be transitive which means the relation is delivered from one level to another. For example, *daffodil* is a kind (hyponym) of *flower* and *flower* is a hyponym of *plant*, then *daffodil* is a hyponym of *plant* (Bauer, 2012). So anything which is a *daffodil* is necessarily also a *flower*, but the opposite is not true, a *flower* might be a *daffodil*, but it might be a *rose* or *tiger lily*. Therefore, hyponyms are not always straightforward (Trask, 1999).

Murphy (2003) pointed out two types of hyponymy:

1- Taxonomic Hyponymy

This type of hyponymy refers to the phrase “X is a kind of Y”. For example, *cow* is a kind of *animal*. It is worth mentioning that this type is logical and analytic, for example, non- animals cannot be cows, that is why it is more important than the second type.

2- Functional Hyponymy

It refers to the phrase ‘is used as a kind of’. For example, *cow* is used as a kind of *livestock*. It means that *cow* functions as *livestock*.

The functional hyponymy is not significant as taxonomic hyponymy since it is not logically a must relation. Not every *cow* is a *livestock*. Also, not every *cat* is a *pet* because, logically, there are cats which are not pets (Aronoff and Rees-Miller, 2001).

2.4.4 Homonymy

Homonymy refers to unrelated senses associated with the same word-form. Like *side of river* and *financial institution* associated with *bank*. They are treated as separate words that accidentally have exactly the same form (Cruse, 2006). For example, in the sentences:

- 1- Our house is on the west *bank* of the river.
- 2- I want to save my first salary in the *bank*.

The words *bank* in (1) and (2) are homonyms. They are spelt in the same way and pronounced the same, but their meanings are different. In (1) *bank* refers to ‘the side of a river and the land near it’, while in (2) it is ‘an organization that provides various financial services’.

- 3- The prince invites Cinderella to dance in *the ball*.
- 4- The boys like to play with the *ball*.

In (3) and (4) *ball* are homonyms. They are written in the same way and have the same pronunciation but have different meanings. *Ball* in (3) means ‘a large formal party with dancing’, while in (4) it refers to ‘a round object used for throwing, hitting or kicking in games and sports’. Linguists pointed out two types of homonymy:

1- Absolute Homonymy

Words with unrelated meanings that share all other constitutive properties. That is to say, they must have the same spelling, pronunciation and be grammatically equivalent. For example,

light ₁ (adjective)	(easy to life or move)
light ₂ (adjective)	(natural light of day)

2- Partial Homonymy

Words with unrelated meanings, but coincide in some of their grammatical forms, but not all of them. For example, *lie*₁ (v) (*lie, lain*), *lie*₂ (v) (*lied, lied*), only the form and the sounds are the same, but they are distinct words (Lobner, 2013).

Finch (2005) provides another definition of partial homonymy that homonyms may be identical in their phonological form or in their orthographic form. On the basis of this definition, partial homonyms are subdivided into two types: homophones and homographs.



Homophony: is a single pronunciation with two or more meanings like [tu] (to, too, two). Also, the words *flour -flower, were- where, through- threw, night- knight*, have the same pronunciation, but different spellings and different unrelated meanings.

Homography: is a single spelling with two or more meanings like [ri:d] the present tense of read, and [red] the past tense of read. Similarly, *tear* [tiə] (drop of moisture) and *tear* [teə] (to destroy) have the same spelling but different pronunciation, with different unrelated meanings (Hudson, 2000:313).

2.4.5 Polysemy

Aitchison (2012) defines polysemy, the so called 'layering' as relatedness of meaning accompanying identical form, in which one form (written or spoken) having multiple meaning, all related by extension. Polysemy also means clustering of senses in an entry. So, words that have several related but distinct senses are said to be polysemous. For example, the word "head" used to refer to the top part of our body, top of a glass, top of a company or department (Yule, 1996).

Moreover, polysemy is not restricted to just one part of speech, as nouns. The verb "run" is also polysemous, like: *Run a race, run for office, this road runs from east to west, the motor is running, run a computer program, the water is running down the roof, run in a stocking, etc* (Hurford, 2007).

2.5 The Language of Humor

Language is the medium through which we communicate. There are three major functions of language. The transactional, that language enables us to accomplish the needs and exchanging goods and services, the interpersonal that helps us to mingle with the society, and the aesthetic that it can be put to play, trigger laughter and humor (Nunan, 2013). However, the former functions gained much of the attention, the study of humor has not been taken seriously because of the feeling that academic propriety is linked with unenjoyable subject matter, and thus be less important than other matters of study (Chiaro, 1992).

So far, the discussion has focused on paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes and their features. Now, it is time to comment on their comic potential and with exploring the language of humor and wordplay as such. Ross defines humor as something that makes people laugh or smile (2005). Though this is not a precise definition because we cannot say that something lacks humor just because someone did not laugh at it and also smiling and laughing do not express only amusement. There are countless ways which make people laugh and wordplay is one of the ways.

Chiaro (1992) describes the term and says that humor through word play includes every possible way in which language is used with the intention of amusement. In fact, deviation from expected meanings often create humor (Denham and Lobeck, 2013). Martin (2007) views humor as a habitual pattern, an attitude, and aesthetic response, that includes the ability to understand, produce, and appreciate jokes as a characteristic of a person rather than of a statement. In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*, David Crystal (1994:3) comments: "variations in self-expression are most noticeable in those areas of language use where great care is being taken, such as literature and humor." It means that humor is carefully planned to serve as enjoyment and pleasure for people, unlike unintentional humor which might be caused by some gaps and breaks in an expression. So, a great deal of humor is linguistic in nature that puts two disconnected images or frames of reference together. Apart from the paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations, van Lier (1995, cited in Nunan, 2013) provides some other ways of wordplay and humor like Spoonerism; slips of the tongue, euphemism, oxymoron, malaproposism). These linguistic features focus on the element of surprise which Carroll used in his stories. He makes astonishment and hence produces a humorous impression by the conflict between our expectation and what we actually hear in the joke.



3. Analysis and Discussion

This section is devoted reflecting on language, language games and the humorous impression produced by paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations used Alice in Wonderland.

3.1 Humor Arising from Syntagmatic Axis

To begin with the syntagmatic relations, collocation and fixed expressions like idioms and proverbs are concerned.

It has been already pointed out that collocations do not have to always appear together, but there is a greater possibility for the words to come together. What is more, Collocations allow the speaker to play with the meanings of words and can be used as a base for jokes. Carroll uses the collocation *so suddenly* for comic effect when Alice meets the Cheshire-Cat in 'Pig and Pepper' episode.

"Did you say pig, or fig?" said the Cat.

"I said pig," replied Alice; "and I wish you wouldn't keep appearing and vanishing so suddenly: you make one quite giddy."

"All right," said the Cat; and this time it vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, which remained some time after the rest of it had gone." (Carroll:1865)

The Cat replies Alice's *so suddenly* by *vanishing slowly*, because he treats the item *suddenly* as an adverb of manner .i. e as an individual item. However, Alice utters the phrase *so suddenly* as a unitary intensifier. What makes it funny is that the intensifier is semantically redundant in the sense that the semantic content of the intensifier is already more or less present in the word but Carroll prefers to add an intensifier for hyperbolic effect and stimulates laughter as a result.

Here, the syntagmatic relation, namely, collocation *so suddenly* and the paradigmatic relation, to be precise, antonym *appearing and vanishing* together make a comic situation like playing hide and seek that make the reader to reflect and laugh.

Logically, idioms bear no parallel between the words and the meaning. One cannot predict the meaning from its parts. Thus, their interpretation depends on the context and often leads to ambiguity. This confusing ambiguity is sometimes used as a means of creating a humorous effect. The idiom shown in the following extract from 'Pig and Pepper' episode in Alice in Wonderland stimulates laughter.

"Please would you tell me," said Alice, a little timidly, for she was not quite sure whether it was good manners for her to speak first, "why your cat grins like that?"

"It's a Cheshire cat," said the Duchess, "and that's why. Pig!" (Carroll:1865)

In this instance, Carroll brings our attention to a common idiom *Grin like a Cheshire cat* which is defined in English Idioms by Seidl and McMordie, as smiling so broadly as the gums appear, especially in a self-satisfied way. The idiomatic meaning of this expression leaves us with a grin without a cat, and this is what makes the idiom charming and ridiculous. The idiom sets us up Alice's comments later in the chapter that she's "*often seen a cat without a grin, but a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life,*" one of the most humorous lines that Carroll made by playing with word order.

Turning to proverbs, Lexicographers sometimes consider proverbs as idioms, therefore, they may be found in dictionaries of idioms. This is due to that fact that proverbs and idioms have a feature in common that is the non-literality of a denoting object. But unlike idioms, one can easily infer the meaning of a proverb from its constituents, because there is a direct link between the literal meaning and the denoting object. This example below



reveals that Carroll even manipulates proverbs with the purpose of stimulating laughter. In 'The Mock Turtle's Story' episode, the Duchess always moralizes everything by playing on the English proverb *take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves*.

'Somebody said,' Alice whispered, 'that it's done by everybody minding their own business!'

'Ah, well! It means much the same thing,' said the Duchess, digging her sharp little chin into Alice's shoulder as she added, 'and the moral of THAT is--"Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves."

'How fond she is of finding morals in things!' Alice thought to herself."
(Carroll:1865)

The Duchess instructs Alice by manipulating a proverb and changing the words *pence* and *pounds* to her intended subject matter *sense* and *sounds*. That is, she advises Alice to mind the meanings of her speech because if the meanings are right, then the appropriate form will follow. In other words, if you know what you want to say, then you will certainly find a way to say it. This is a good example of Carroll's wordplay to shift the meanings and stir the reader's mind, raising their eyebrows in amazement then laugh.

3.2 Humor Arising from Paradigmatic Axis

As far as paradigmatic plane is concerned, jokes are mainly arising from synonymy, antonymy, polysemy, homonymy, and hyponymy.

The starting point of the paradigmatic relations is the possible synonyms that Carroll uses in his works. As discussed in the previous chapter, synonymy is the relationship between two words that have the same sense. Murphy (2003) argues that synonymy is not the type of information that is stored mind due to the fact that synonymy can vary according to the context. This is especially true since words have slightly different senses depending on the linguistic context and happen continuously in Carroll's text.

Alice is astonished while all the other creatures act straightforwardly in that linguistic nonsensical wonderland. The dream context creates a different world in which common sense references are frequently changing, making nonsensical situations and humorous disputes between Alice and the other creatures she encounters.

An example of synonymy extracted from 'Pig and Pepper' episode in Alice in Wonderland illustrates Carroll's talent in producing humor. When Alice refuses to go among mad people, the Cheshire-Cat tells her that all creatures of wonderland are mad.

"To begin with,' said the Cat, 'a dog's not mad. You grant that?'

'I suppose so,' said Alice.

'Well, then,' the Cat went on, 'you see, a dog growls when it's angry, and wags its tail when it's pleased. Now I growl when I'm pleased, and wag my tail when I'm angry. Therefore, I'm mad.'

'I call it purring, not growling,' said Alice." (Carroll:1865)

According to Urban Dictionary, *growl* means the low continuous sound in the throat made by dogs, as a sign of anger and *purr* means the low continues sound that a cat makes in its throat when it is happy or comfortable. As such, they become near synonyms as a result of their collocational variation. Palmer (1981) points out that some words are collocationally restricted and only occur in company with certain words. The word *growl* collocates with *dogs* while *angry* and *purr* collocates with *the cat* while happy or comfortable. The cat shows its madness through the word *growl*, whereas Alice corrects growling for purring. This inverted attitude of the Cheshire-Cat sums up the nature of wonderland and in turn makes the reader reflect and laugh.



Another example of producing humor is by means of antonyms. One type of antonymy is relational antonymy that is defined by Palmer (1981) as pairs of words which show reversal relationship between words. This can be found in the text extracted from 'A Mad Tea-Party' episode in *Alice in Wonderland*. Four characters are involved: Alice, The Hatter, The March Hare and the Dormouse, who is nearly asleep.

*'Have you guessed the riddle yet?' the Hatter said, turning to Alice again.
 'No, I give it up,' Alice replied: 'what's the answer?'
 'I haven't the slightest idea,' said the Hatter.
 'Nor I,' said the March Hare.
 Alice sighed wearily. 'I think you might do something better with the time,'
 she said, 'than waste it in asking riddles that have no answers.'
 'If you knew Time as well as I do,' said the Hatter, 'you wouldn't talk about
 wasting IT. It's HIM.' (Carroll:1865)*

For Alice, the language-game of *asking* a riddle is ridiculous and useless if the one who asks it cannot come up with a suitable *answer*. The Hatter's perspective is different as far as the game rests in the very fact of asking the riddle and not so much in finding the correct answer. The Hatter feels that the outcome of asking a riddle is achieved since the riddle attracted Alice's attention and made her think about it for quite a while.

As one of the essential relations in analyzing the meaning of words, hyponymy can also function as a trigger of laughter. In the subsequent quote from 'The Mock Turtle's Story' in *Alice in Wonderland*, what the Gryphon, The Mock Turtle, and Alice are talking about is the subjects taught in school.

*'Ah! then yours wasn't a really good school,' said the Mock Turtle in a tone
 of great relief. 'Now at OURS they had at the end of the bill, "French,
 music, AND WASHING--extra."
 'You couldn't have wanted it much,' said Alice; 'living at the bottom of the
 sea.'
 'I couldn't afford to learn it.' said the Mock Turtle with a sigh. 'I only took
 the regular course.'
 'What was that?' inquired Alice.
 'Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with,' the Mock Turtle replied;
 'and then the different branches of Arithmetic-- Ambition, Distraction,
 Uglification, and Derision.'(Carroll:1865)*

Among the wide range of *subjects* presented by the Mock Turtle which is the hypernym, some are fairly conventional like *Arithmetic*, *Music*, *French*, which are the co-hyponyms, but others are rather unexpected like *Ambition*, *Distraction*, *Derision*. The one that brings Alice to the state of astonishment and triggers laughter is the word *Uglification*.

Then, the Gryphon tries to explain the word by bringing the opposite of the word in the foreground;

*'I never heard of "Uglification,"' Alice ventured to say. 'What is it?'
 The Gryphon lifted up both its paws in surprise. 'What! Never heard of
 uglifying!' it exclaimed. 'You know what to beautify is, I suppose?'
 'Yes,' said Alice doubtfully: 'it means--to--make--anything--prettier.'
 'Well, then,' the Gryphon went on, 'if you don't know what to uglify is, you
 ARE a simpleton.'(Carroll:1865)*



The words *beauty* and *ugly* are antonyms. Here, *beautify* is used as the opposite of the word *uglify* that makes Alice understand what the word *uglifying* mean. Consequently, Alice uses the synonym *prettier* to show that she knows what *beautify* means and in turn comprehends the word *uglifying*.

To amuse the readers, Carroll plays on different senses of the same words known as homonymy and sometimes on the similar senses or sounds of different words known as polysemy. In the 'Mock Turtle's Story' episode, both phenomena are illustrated.

'Yes, we went to school in the sea, though you mayn't believe it--'
 'I never said I didn't!' interrupted Alice.
 'You did,' said the Mock Turtle.
 'Hold your tongue!' added the Gryphon, before Alice could speak again.
 The Mock Turtle went on.
 'We had the best of educations--in fact, we went to school every day--'
 'I'VE been to a day-school, too,' said Alice; 'you needn't be so proud as all that.' (Carroll:1865)

This extract reveals the two types of paradigmatic sense relations mentioned above successfully. Firstly, Carroll manipulates different meanings of the word *school* which is a polysemous word. According to Urban Dictionary, *school* is a place where children go to be educated, which is also Alice's understanding of the word. In another sense, *school* means a large number of fish or other sea animals swimming together. Since a turtle's household is the sea, *school* stands for a group of fish or whales swimming together for the Mock Turtle.

Secondly, the sound similarities between the word *lessen* and *lesson* demonstrate homonymy. It seems that the Mock Turtle and Gryphon follow some sound reasoning of their own and surprise Alice with the idea that *lessons* are named so because they *lessen*, that is they become shorter form day to day. Alikeness of the sounds is taken for granted by Carroll to make the phenomena more logical which in turn brings about the reader to laugh.

Changing the topic is frequently practiced in Carroll's text. Due to the misinterpretation of the words, most of the time the characters avoid the conversation by throwing in a sulky reply, as The Mock Turtle does in 'The Lobster-Quadrille' episode.

'Of course not,' said the Mock Turtle: 'why, if a fish came to ME, and told me he was going a journey, I should say "With what porpoise?"'
 'Don't you mean "purpose"?' said Alice.

'I mean what I say,' the Mock Turtle replied in an offended tone. And the Gryphon added 'Come, let's hear some of YOUR adventures.' (Carroll:1865)

The mock turtle ends the discussion when Alice's questions threaten the misuse of the word *porpoise*. The homonymic words *porpoise* and *purpose* are exploited and played upon. The play sets between the common perspective that all journeys should have a purpose or goal, and the existence of porpoise, small dolphins which live with turtles in the sea. Accordingly, the Mock Turtle uses the word porpoise belonging to the semantic field of sea while Alice highlights the implied meaning as her comment brings to mind the word purpose. By doing so, she generates another comic situation.

4. Conclusion

Summing up the points building on the theoretical part, the practical part specifies the material and provides the explanation of chosen extracts from the story. On the syntagmatic axes, examples of collocation, idiom, and proverb can be found. On the paradigmatic axes, examples of synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, homonymy, and polysemy can be found. It is pointed out that, alongside the paradigmatic relations, there are still



structural relations between items. Sometimes, both relations are in practice together. They do not only work together but shade into each other. That is to say, the two axes are transcendent but meanwhile coincide with strengthening the effect on the reader. However, even it is not always easy to know at any point in a text, which of the two relations is more effective, especially in producing humor which is the main concern of this paper. Finally, it is concluded that Carroll was able to detect different kinds of relation in the language system and used the language rules and its ambiguities to play with it in order to stimulate laughter and humor. Generally, it gives a kind of complexity to his style of writing, but peering into the details of his writings, the fun and exciting part of his language appears.

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شيكردنه وه يه كي سيماتيكي بۇ رۆمانى ئه ليس له شارى خهونه كان ي لويس كارول

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پوخته

ئهم توژينه وه سيماتيكيه ههوليكه بۇ شيكردنه وه ي رۆمانى ئه ليس له شارى خهونه كان ئامانجى توژينه وه كه ئاشناكردنى خوتنه ره به په يوه نديه سينتگماتيكي و پارادگماتيكيه كان، ههروه ها دياريكردنى ئه وه په يوه نديانه ي كه لويس كارول به كارى هيناوه بۇ دروست كردنى گالته و گه پ. توژينه وه كه به وه ئه نجامه گه يشتوه كه له ته وه ري په يوه نديه سينتگماتيكيه كان (جووته وشه، ئيديوم، پهندي پيشينان) ههروه ها له ته وه ري په يوه نديه پارادگماتيكيه كان (هاوواتا، دژواتا، داپوشين، هاوانا، فرهواتا) به كارهاتوه بۇ دروست كردنى گالته و گه پ.

وشه گرنگه كان: واتا ناسى، په يوه ندى سينتگماتيكي، په يوه ندى پارادگماتيكي، يارى كردن به وشه، گالته و گه پ.

تحليل دلالي لرواية لويس كارول أليس في بلاد العجائب

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الكلمات الداله: علم المعاني، العلاقات التركيبية، العلاقات النموذجية، التلاعب بالكلام، فكاهة.