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Semantic Roles and Features in Oscar Wilde's The Happy Prince

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ABSTRACT:- Learning a language is not just about acquiring the vocabulary and the structure of a language, it is about being able to create sentences so as to communicate specific meanings. Semantic is "the scientific analysis of the meaning of words based on their system". From this perspective, any sentence meaning analysis must involve an examination of the semantic relationships that are built into the part of a sentence in addition to the examination of individual linguistic constituents. Investigation of semantic roles is one of the important tasks of semantic analysis where the semantic roles are those relationships between the participants and the predicate which express the action, event or state. The agent, experiencer, theme, patient, recipient, beneficiary and instrument are roles which offer a good framework for analyzing the representation of the participants in discourse. The present study, therefore, deals with the semantic aspect of grammatical subject in Oscar Wilde's "The Happy Prince", especially the relationship between the grammatical structure and semantic interpretation. The Happy Prince is an appropriate setting for this investigation as there are a number of human, animal and inanimate actors in this story who perform actions, experience events, have qualities, and are involved in various states and events. This involves a lot of variation of semantic roles of subjects throughout the text, due to the use of characters like the Happy Prince and the Swallow, as well as other animate and inanimate entities.

I. INTRODUCTION

In any language, the meaning of words, phrases and sentences is called semantics and is an essential part of understanding and sharing information. The semantics of subjects is important in the English language since subjects are the main actors or agents in a sentence and the semantic weight of a subject is very strong in English. The science of communication is the science of meaning (semantics), and communication is increasingly becoming an important factor in the social organization, and therefore, the need for understanding of it is ever growing. Semantics is related to the processes of "thought, cognition, conceptualization" all of them are strongly related to the classification and communication of our experience of the world in language (Leech,1981:p.4). The study tries to provide answers to three questions. A. What are the semantic roles of the subject in some texts of " Happy Prince"? Second: is there a relationship between semantic roles and feature of the subject?. Third: What role does the subject play in the sentence for the Happy Prince (in terms of meaning). The study is based on the following aims: to provide enlightenment to the semantic role of the subject in English, to find out the types of semantic features of the subject and to analyze some texts taken from Happy Princess to examine the types and functions of semantic features of the subject and its roles.

II. THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE

We all have a little bit of an explicit, conscious, but mostly implicit, knowledge of our mother tongue. We don't know much but we speak the language. We are literate in that we can let others know what we want to say and understand what others are saying. But it is improbable that we know all the multiple possible meanings of common words and how they relate to each other, or that we are even aware of all the multiple possible ambiguities that are all the time lurking in language. Our communication is not limited to a predetermined list of subjects since language is creative; We continuously create and comprehend new messages in (Kreidler:1998). To produce or recognize a word, speakers must be able to: pronounce the word correctly; know how the word is integrated into other utterances; define the word. Most of what we know is implicit because we learn our native language so early in childhood that we don't have to think about it very much. The task of the linguist is to give an explanation of this tacit knowledge. A linguist is a person who writes a grammar to describe a language. As

Chomsky and Halle (1968:1) say "Grammar" is the term used here for both the implicit knowledge possessed by the speaker and the explicit knowledge of which Chomsky and Halle speak, and which he is trying to describe and explain. Semantics is the actual definition of the words we use. Both relate to the utilization of Language. Semantics is a meaning specifically, and semiotics, which is "the study of meaning in general". But semantics on meanings that really are manifested in the overt form distinctions focuses. (William frawiey.1994:55). Semantics is "the study of meanings". It is derived from the Greek word "semanen" (to signify or mean). It deals with the relationship between words or symbols and objects or concepts to which they seem to refer. Specifically, semantics is "a branch of linguistics as it is an empirical study of the meaning of words in the existing language" (American Encyclopedia : 536). Semantics is "one of the major branches of linguistics which involves understanding, the words meaning, the construction of sentences and symbols". It had to do with the readers' ability to comprehend what they were reading and how they interpreted it. In addition, semantics creates a link between words that are placed together and interpret a phrase based on the literal or metaphorical meaning of the words (as cited by Ningrat et al., 2019). Semantics is designed to make certain words or phrases more comprehensible and to avoid ambiguity that might deceive a reader into believing that a word has multiple meanings; it also helps readers discover a meaning because the removal or moving of a single word will affect the meaning of the entire sentence or make it "anomalous". Sense relations are very important in sentences since a single word is devoid of any meaning or sense. In his essay, Leech (1981, 9) argues that the term "meaning" is a weak area in the study of language and that, as science improves it will be useful to have a definition for the word "meaning". Because of this, meaning is a weak place in language studies in that the more scientific the knowledge of human beings, the more contextualized the meaning of the word meaning will be. Leech (1981:9) has classified meaning, which is a superior classification because these groups provide an overview or summary of the meaning as a whole. The next meanings are:

1. Conceptual meaning

Other names for conceptual meaning are denotative meaning and cognitive meaning. These types of meaning cover basic and essential components of meaning that seem to be conveyed by the literal use of a word. It is the type of meaning that is described by dictionaries. In English for instance, the word (needle) could be "thin, sharp, steel instrument" Leech (1981:9).

2. Connotative Meaning

When a phrase's meaning goes beyond its conceptual "stuff", it has a connotative meaning. Other properties, physical, psychological or social, are referred to in the connotative sense. The connotative meaning is associated with words which have a secondary meaning that is suggested by context. It contains the emotions and thoughts which people might associate with those words, in other words. In fact, connotative meaning is unstable. It is changed from one time to another according to "culture, historical period, experience and the people". For example, in the past the word woman is conatively: "frail, cowardly, emotional, irrational and other low or weak connotations". These are now in flux or at least one of these traits can no longer be passed down to woman (ibid).

3.Thematic meaning

The third sort of meaning (thematic meaning) refers to the organization of a message in terms of focus, sequencing, and emphasis. More specifically, it is the choice of synonyms that have different communication value. In the sentences:

• The man kills the snake.

• The snake is killed by the man.

Although these sentences are equal in meaning, they are somewhat different in the communicative values due to the difference in the order of the sentences(ibid).

III. REFLECTED MEANING

When a word has two conceptual meanings or two meanings based on two different concepts in the word, it is said to have reflected meaning. Meaning that is developed out of a variety of conceptual interpretations like using the meaning of a word to express feelings about another person(ibid).

IV. AFFECTED MEANING

Affected means that the speaker's opinion is being conveyed, along with his feeling about the subject of the discussion or listening. Often the words used are explicit in their meaning or connotation. If we were trying to get people to be quiet, for instance, we could say: "I'm very sorry, I interrupt you but we wonder if you could talk a little more quietly?". Here goes politeness too, and something like a voice timbre must be affected as well. Wrihatnala (2016:22) argues that they exploit emergent generalizations that facilitate "the mapping from semantics to syntax" in order to express similarities and differences in meaning of verbs in terms of arguments expressed. Semantic roles (also called "thematic relations", "theta roles", "participants roles", and "deep cases")

are terms that are essentially used to describe “some regular predicate-argument relations”. Semantic roles are the contribution of the referent of a noun phrase to the state, action or situation of the sentence. The term "semantic roles" describes how a noun phrase's referent influences the state, activity, or circumstance that the sentence describes. semantics roles have been identified: source, goal, instrument, experiencer, place, agent, patient, theme, and so on. Puspani (2016:30) was made. The first is the semantic role of the agent is the role of the entity that is the intentional subject of the verb. Second, patient the semantic role of the patient is defined as the location where the action of the verb takes place. Third, the semantic role of the instrumental is an entity through which the action of the verb is affected. Goal the semantic role is the direction in which the action of the verb goes, 4th. Fifth, the semantic role of the source is the direction of the source, that is, what it is coming from. Sixth, the entity that the action of the verb is directly directed to is called the semantic role of the theme.

Semantic roles of the subject

The subject of a sentence assumes the semantic role of the “doer” or “agent” of the action.This indicates that the object that carries out the activity that the sentence's verb describes is usually the subject. In the statement “The dog chased the cat,” for instance, “the dog” is both the subject and the agent of the pursuit. First agentive the most typical semantic role of a subject is “agentive”, that is, “the animate being instigating or casing the happening denoting by the verb”. Second instrumental subject a semantic role of the subject that “denotes the inanimate causer of the happening”. Third affected subject one being affected by the event “the door opened”. This role of subject is found with: intransitive verbs: “Jack fell down intensive verbs: The pen is laying on the table”. His English has been improved. (transitive) affected subject “his English has improved”. (intransitive)”. They have increased the price of shirts and decreased the price of trousers”. (they=agentive subject) The price of shirts has increased and that of trousers has decreased. (affected subject) increase (transitive), decrease (intransitive). Fourth recipient subject the subject may also have recipient role. It refers to the person who is affected by the event. (Chomsky and Morris, 1964:22)

Semantics features

According to yule (2014:110-112) in order to explain the “oddness”, we perceive when we read lines like the following, it could be useful to investigate basic conceptual meaning:

-The hamburger ate the man.

-The chair listens to the radio.

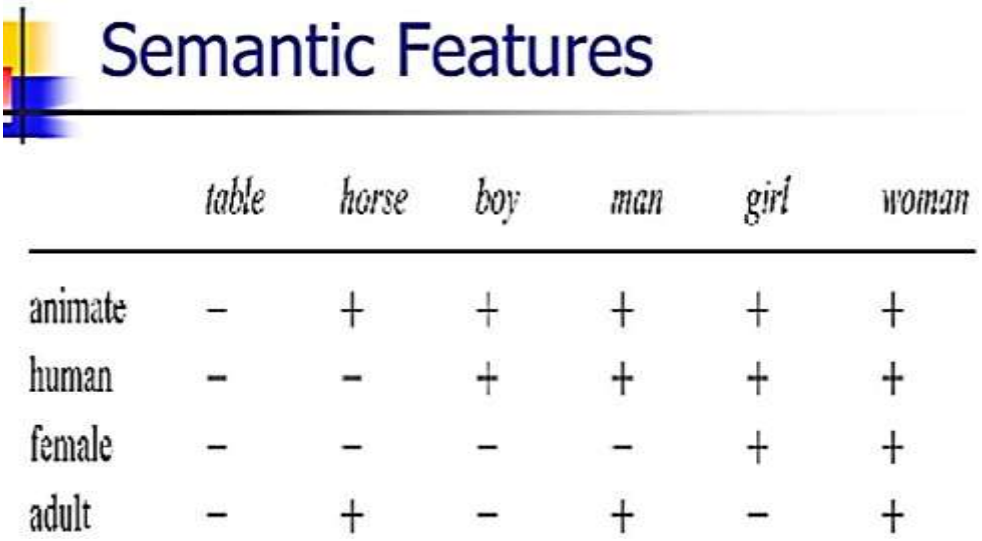
-The cat is reading the newspaper

The strangeness of these statements has nothing to do with the way they are put together syntactically. We have. well-formed structures that follow the fundamental syntactic principles for constructing sentences in English.

NP V NP The hamburger ate the man

The above sentence makes sense syntactically; the meaning is odd. We might be able to pinpoint the issue's origin, because the statement “The man ate the hamburger” is obviously fine. In order to avoid using other inanimate nouns to be used as the subject of the verb “ate”, the conceptual meanings of the nouns hamburger and man must be totally different from one another. So, it is clear that: “any noun that can be the subject of the verb ate has to indicate something that has the ability to be ate”. By attempting to identify the essential component or aspect of meaning that any noun must possess in order to be employed as the subject of the verb ate, we can extend the broad applicability of this insight. An example of such an element could be a “animate being”. Using this concept, we may then characterize a portion of a word's meaning as either possessing (+) or lacking (−) that specific attribute. Hence, the term hamburger has the attribute “−animate” (= does not denote an animate entity) whereas the noun boy has “+animate” (= denotes an animate person).

This straightforward case serves as an example of how to analyze meaning using semantic features. Characters like “+animate, −animate,” “+human, −human,” and “+female, −female,” for example, might be considered as the essential components that distinguish each word's meaning in a language from all others. If we had to list the essential characteristics that differentiate the meanings of a group of English terms, such table, horse, boy, man, girl. we could begin with the chart in Table.



Based on this feature analysis we can conclude "that the meaning of the word girl in English contains properties: [+human, +female, −adult]". To complement the syntactic analysis, features that are essential for a noun to function as a certain verb's subject can be characterized. Subject in a sentence, the doer of the action is referred to as the "subject. It could be a noun phrase, a pronoun or a noun. According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, a subject is "a noun, noun phrase or pronoun" that represents the person or thing doing an action in a sentence (I play) that something is said about in a sentence "the house is very old" or, in a passive sentence, that is affected by the action of the verb in "the tree was blown down in the storm". It takes more work to define the subject in sentences that are more complex and in languages other than English. Sentences beginning with a locative phrase, such as "There is a problem, isn't there?", in which the tag question "isn't there?" appears to imply that the subject is the adverb there, also creating difficulties for the definition of the subject (Valin,2008: 88).

Data Analysis

Happy prince is a short story about a kind little man written by Oscar Wilde. It's a story about a statue of a prince, who was once a real prince, but is now high above the city. The statue is decorated with gold leaf and jewels, and it is a symbol of the city's poor. The Happy Prince is very moved by this and asks the swallow to give his jewels and gold to the poor. The themes of kindness, empathy, and selflessness are shown as the swallow selflessly acts out the prince's wishes while the Happy Prince sacrifices himself and his happiness for the people. Some texts will be randomly selected from the short story "happy prince" for analysis and investigation of the semantic roles and features of the subject. The present study used a qualitative method and descriptive analysis method to analyze semantic roles and features of the subject. Analysis This research examined and categorized the semantic roles which are found in Happy Prince. Here are (20) sentences which involving some types of semantic roles.

Table: The semantic features and semantic roles of the subject

NO	Sentences	Semantic features				Semantic roles
	Subject	Human	Male	Animate	Adult	
1	"they piled the faggots together"	+	+	+	+	Agentive
2	"He was gilded all over with thin leaves of fine gold"	+	+	+	_	Experiencer

3	"a large red ruby glowed on his sword-hilt"	_	_	_	_	Affected
4	"The Happy Prince never dreams of crying for anything"	+	+	+	_	Experiencer
5	"the autumn came they all flew away"	_	_	_	_	Temporary
6	"The eyes of the Happy Prince were filled with Tears"	_	_	_	_	Experiencer
7	"Tears were running down his golden Cheeks"	_	_	_	_	Agentive
8	"His face was so beautiful in the moonlight."	_	_	_	_	Theme
9	"I am the Happy Prince"	+	+	+	_	Experiencer
10	"the little Swallow was filled with pity"	_	+	+	_	Experiencer
11	"street there is a poor house"	_	_	--	_	Locative
12	"I am waited for in Egypt"	+	+	+	_	Agentive
13	"He had met her early in the Spring"	+	+	+	_	Agentive
14	"they will go to sleep in the tomb of the great King"	+	_	+	+	Agentive

15	**“The King is there himself in his painted coffin”**	**+**	**+**	**_**	**+**	**Experiencer**
16	**“He is wrapped in yellow linen”**	**+**	**+**	**+**	**_**	**Agentive**
17	**“Round his neck is a chain of pale green jade”**	**_**	**_**	**_**	**_**	**Locative**
18	**“the Swallow picked out the great ruby from the Prince's Sword”**	**+**	**+**	**+**	**_**	**Agentive**
19	**“He passed over the river”**	**+**	**+**	**+**	**_**	**Agentive**
20	**“he came to the poor house”**	**+**	**+**	**+**	**_**	**Agentive**

1. Sentence -The little swallow was filled with pity. We infer that the type of semantic role of the subject is experiencer, based on the statement. The subject "the little Swallow" is in the experiencer role because it is the one who feels the emotion of pity. The Swallow is experiencing the emotion of pity towards the happy prince when he saw the eyes of "the Happy Prince were filled with tears". **2. Sentence** -He passed over the river. The subject – in this sentence the one performing the action – is agentive because it is the agent of passing over the river. The subject is doing some action, making it agentive. The little Swallow was passed over the river when the Happy Prince asked him to pick out the great ruby from his sword, and flew away with it in his beak over the roofs of the town.
3. Sentence -The ruby has fallen out of his. The sentence is affected as it describes what has happened to the action object, the ruby. It is about the ruby that is falling out rather than on who or what is triggering the falling out.
4. Sentence -I am the Happy Prince. The sentences "I am the Happy Prince" definitely has the experiencer role because it is the one experiencing the state of being or existence as the Happy Prince. The semantic features played by subject.

Results and Discussion

This article analyzed and classified the semantic features of the subject that found in Happy Prince. The semantic features are explained by one sentence from the samples. I am, I am the Happy Prince. I'm the Happy Prince N V NP. The subject (I) in the sentence is a pronoun that refers to the person speaking or to the person or thing about whom he is speaking. If we want to determine the features of meaning any noun must have to be used as the subject of the verb (am) such as the element in the sentence the subject a state of a prince, which depicts a male figure. though it's not physically animate, it embodies human-like qualities through its actions and emotions making it figuratively animate. The subject is "we can use this idea to describe part of the meaning of words as having either plus (+)or minus(_)that particular feature, so the features that the subject (I)are +animate and +human and, +male". Results Based on above analysis. Let's look at the semantics features of the subject (+animate, + male, + human) in this sentence (I am the Happy Prince). All of these features provide an experience role to the subject. Experience is the semantic role of an entity which is the main part of an action. Normally, an experience is "an entity that receives a sensory impression, or, in some other way, is the locus of some event or activity that involves neither volition nor a change of state". We will observe the verb in this sentence doesn't need any action but represent semeion as a semantic feature. For Subject with features (_ animate, _ human), we can't say that the subject has experienced but can be affected by or instrument or role. From analysis, it is found that there is relation between semantic features and semantic roles.

Conclusion

In conclusion, semantics is a relatively neglected and under-researched field at times, as compared to syntax, morphology and phonology. Why was this? The answer lies in the fact that sometimes it was accepted by most of the contemporary scholars, sometimes it was rejected to a great extent. Semantics has been given a facelift these days. This area has a lot of potential to be explored, and to be made interesting. But further studies are required to tap this large area of research. If the knowledge of the semantic roles of the subject would be known, then control over the formed sentence with all its parts could be achieved. Use the results of the analysis analyze certain texts from the short story Happy Prince in chapter three. In some stories, the short story, there are seven different types of semantic roles. The most common types of Semantic role were agentive, and least were theme, location, and temporary as the conclusion. In addition, the results prove that there is a relationship between Semantic roles and features of the subject.

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