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'PLACE' IN CONTEXT: A MULTIFACETED PERSPECTIVE IN THEODORE DREISER'S THE FINANCIER (TRILOGY OF DESIRE)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to trace the variety of meanings connected to 'place' in Theodore Dreiser's *The Financier* (Trilogy of Desire). This research is an attempt to highlight the variety of stylistic richness with special reference to lexeme, semantics and pragmatics. Semantics and pragmatics deal with lexical meaning and contextual meaning, both are opposite in nature. The word 'space' is identified in the text and analysed thoroughly in the context for multidimensional approach. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method as it emphasized on describing the meaning aspects of lexeme and the findings were presented in textual description. However, number was also used to support data analysis as the researcher has identified, analysed and interpret by using lexical and contextual meaning theory of Josh Daniel Parera (1990). The results contribute the lexical and contextual meaning of space which make a measurable contribution in the field of American literature. There is also room for the future researchers to conduct research in the field of semantics and expand the analysis of semantics to its various types in the field of linguistics.

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a key role in the life of human beings as it is a system of sound and meaning to express thoughts and feelings. Linguistics is the scientific study of language which can be divided into Macro Linguistics and Micro Linguistics according to John Lyons (1981). He claims that macro-linguistics deals with language and its relation to other disciplines. In simple words, it is concerned with the use of language in daily life. This is also called the external view of a language such as language and society (Sociolinguistics), language and mind (Psycholinguistics), language and law (Forensic Linguistics) and language and brain (Neurolinguistics). Micro-Linguistics deals with the language itself. It studies the internal structure of a language such as phonetics, phonology,

morphology, syntax and semantics. It explores the different aspects of language which deal with words and lexeme in different directions.

Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) is a famous American novelist. He wrote so many novels including *Trilogy of Desire*, a series of three novels; *The Financier* (1912), *The Titan* (1914) and *The Stoic* (1947). I have selected *The Financier* (1912) and highlighted the lexical and contextual meaning of the lexeme 'place'.

The business tycoon is an important issue between 1880s and 1890s which catch the attention of American writers. The characters often start their career at the bottom of social ladder. Theodore Dreiser modelled his protagonist accordingly. Frank Cowperwood, the protagonist in *The Financier* (1912) observed the lobster-squid event at the beginning of the novel and has a strong impact on his future activities. The hero involved in jungle like business milieu. He violates law, social ethics and cultural norms for the purpose of economic and financial gains. Material success is the key objectives of his desire. The desire has an important place in whole activities of Frank Cowperwood as promethean figure in *The Financier* (1912). He is a figure who belongs to that group of people whose destiny is to lead others.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The authors select words in a particular order for sharing the concepts in written language. Gairns and Redman (1986) specify the term for the organized vocabulary is "lexical sets" while Marzano and Marzano (1988) prefer to call it as "semantic clusters". Dell Hathaway Hymes (1972) focuses on communicative competence of a language use. His approach is totally based in the use of language in society and emphasis on the pragmatic factors that affect the use of language. Communicative approach contextualizes the language for specific social situations. This approach gives more attention to the discourse instead of lexeme. The importance of vocabulary is not considered in this approach.

Semantics and pragmatics belong to the linguistic study of meaning. Emma Borg (2006) claims that semantics is different from pragmatics in term of its focus in social situation. In other words, semantics focuses on sentence meaning and pragmatics focuses on speaker meaning in a particular situation. According to Kreidler (1998), there are many dimensions of meaning in front of the reader or listener. The receiver should be sensitive enough to understand the attached sense with the lexeme. Semantics is the systematic study of meaning for which three disciplines are concerned; philosophy, psychology and semantics. Philosophy deals with fundamental knowledge about facts in comparison with others to identify the truth. Psychology deals with individual humans learn, retain and loss of information. Semantics deals with attached meaning in general and associate meaning in particular situation.

Donald Pizer (1976) highlights the various characteristics of Theodore Dreiser as American novelist. The portray of Theodore Dreiser family in his literary pieces are explored by Alan Kent (1968). Mick Short (2013) identified the stylistic elements such as selection of words, sentence structure, figurative

language in various novels of Theodore Dreiser in detail. Mary Hricko (2009) explores various cities and places where the characters move from one city to another to achieve the desired objective. In other words, Hricko pays much more attention to the importance of places in the works of Theodore Dreiser. Tamlyn Avery (2017) highlighted the various characteristics of the protagonist as superman in the novels of Theodore Dreiser.

RESEARCH METHOD

The analysed materials in this research article is the selected portion of text, *The Financier* (1912) while the objective is to interpret the lexical meaning and contextual meaning. Keeping in view the nature of data, this is qualitative research with deals with interpretation of lexeme, 'place'.

RESEARCH APPROACH

The data for this research is in the form of words selected from the text, *The Financier* (1912) for analysis. This research is qualitative as well as quantitative in nature because it deals with number of lexeme along with its analysis.

Source of Data

The key source of data in this research is the text of Theodore Dreiser's *The Financier* (1912). The researcher analysed lexical meaning and contextual meaning of the lexeme 'place'.

'Place' in Context

Famous linguists such as G. Talmy, R. Langaker, G. Lakoff, E. Sweetser have discussed the concept of "space" three times. 'Space' is a term used to indicate the appearance of objects and the type of view. The plural style of the lexical and semantic units in this novel is highlighted for the purpose of analysis. have the power to communicate with local relationships within a written speech. In thinking languages, the experience and importance of class groups are considered: our physical instability in space enhances the set of graphic images behind the increased hiring of local names, which are the source of various local suspicions. Therefore, the point of this prominent article is to point to the edge of the concept of 'space' expressed in special wide devices based on the fabric of the novel.

Theodore Dreiser's *Trilogy of Desire* itself is a three-dimensional, three-section novel - a story with a solid association of two significant ideas of mental language - 'reality'. 'Time' is taken in its few phases: - according to the perspective of the verifiable period (wars, mechanical advances, and so on); - according to the viewpoint of one individual's life as far as possible (counting every one of the hours of his youth, immaturity and 'day break'); - according to the perspective of human connections (particularly of people) and the qualities and upsides of social acknowledgment at that point. It ought to likewise be referenced here that the creator's design has its own characteristics, by counting taking certain details: 1. being laconism; 2. direct exposure; 3. a natural example (about each image of a city, a street, etc. It contains a few comparisons with a man, with common characteristics, practices really expressed); 4. the portrayal

of the characters and the emergence of unpopular strikes but different considerations in the details of the feature (talking about hidden things); 5. The need for in-depth psychological analysis of characters and processes for thinking about their behaviour, appropriate roles and responsibilities.

The Financier published in 1912 and highlighted the life of Philadelphia. Within the linguistic concept the 'space' of the concept is centered on objects: location, location, location, location, location, location and terminals to determine its use on various complex devices. In this way, after examining the content of the novel, the word 'place' and related words were selected in The Financier (1912) for further analysis:

Serial NO.	Words	Times
01	Place	150
02	Site	34
03	Territory	07
04	Area	06
05	Region	04
06	Spot	04
07	Location	02
08	Zone	02

The total number of words in The Financier (1912) are 196,680, meaning that the unusual occurrence of the above-mentioned words catches the attention of the researcher to analyse this frequent use of words 'place', 'spot', 'site', 'area', 'region', 'location' and 'zone'. Let us consider some situations in which using the same word is used. We will try to present a few relevant cases and at the same time separate them from the crowds of explanations they refer to in each case.

In any piece of literature, there can be many uses of space in the attached description as well as the description of the assembly. Theodore Dreiser, a well-known American novelist, also uses the concept of space with the names of characters in a different setting. His realistic expression of the real world is a major feature of his writings. He seldom praises and expresses nature differently, it is very common for him to give a demonstration of a building, a place and a place.

Excerpt 1

"...fell heir to the place vacated by the promoted teller" (3).

Analysis

Mostly, Theodore Dreiser uses the word 'place' in contextual meaning. Contextual meaning is a type of meaning of lexeme or word which is in the text. As mentioned earlier, there are 150 mentions of 'place' in the novel. Among the 150 mentions, 50 are used in contextual meaning of post, job, position. This is the peculiar characteristic of Dreiser's style to use the word 'place' in the meaning of a 'post', 'job', 'position'. It is necessary that there must be proper

understanding between sender and receiver to pick the contextual meaning of a word.

Excerpt 2

"...Buttonwood Street, where he spent the first ten years of his life, was a lovely place for a boy to live" (9).

Analysis

In the excerpt mention above, 'place' is used in denotative meaning. Denotation explores the attached meaning, original meaning and first meaning of the lexeme or word. Here the word 'place' is used for home, a residential building.

Excerpt 3

"I tell you, Henry, you have a rather nice place here" (13).

ANALYSIS

Again, the word 'place' is used in denotative meaning. "Denotative meaning is referred to as a word or group of words which based on direct relationship between the unit and form of language beyond language unit was treated appropriately". The character advises and even have a strong support as it is considered to be a good and nice home for the other character. The word 'place' is used for home in the excerpt mentioned above as suggested by the character.

Excerpt 4

"I've seen their place" (23).

ANALYSIS

In the above-mentioned excerpt, the word 'place' is used in denotative meaning instead of connotative meaning which refers to negative or positive association that a word carries naturally. The excerpt 1,2,3,4 mentioned above are used for the place where people live, home. Among the 150 mentions, 40 mentions are used for home, a living place for people.

In addition, the process of combining free morphemes in linguistics is to create new word having the grammatical status of verb, adjective, noun etc. It is called compounding in English. There are three types of compound words; open compound (two words), closed compound (one word), and hyphenated compound (hyphen is used between the two words). Theodore Dreiser used all these three types of compound. It may be single word (closed compound) like 'birthplace', 'fireplace', 'commonplace' or two words (open compound) like 'home place', dining places etc. Hyphenated compound is 'meeting-places' and 'hiding-places'. All the mentioned words are taken from Theodore Dreiser's The Financier (1912) to highlight the use of 'place' in the text.

Furthermore, phrases are used for expression in The Financier (1912) having the word 'place'. These are; 'In the first place', 'take place' 'in the second place', 'in the next place', 'in one's place' etc. Similarly, verbs having the

lexeme (place) are used in the text also. The verb 'place' and 'replace' is mentioned in the text for the purpose of concept sharing.

Excerpt 5

"Money was so scarce that it could fairly be said not to exist at all. Capital, frightened by uncertain trade and money conditions, everywhere, retired to its hiding-places in banks, vaults, tea-kettles, and stockings" (51).

ANALYSIS

Personification which is a figure of speech is used in the excerpt mentioned above to attribute human characteristics to non-human or life in lifeless objects. A special type of compound is used which is called hyphenated compound 'hiding-places' in Theodore Dreiser's *The Financier* (1912). Money is attributed with human qualities with words such as frightened and retired which is a best example of personification. The key desire of Frank Cowperwood is to get success financially for which he struggles and ultimately achieved through hard work and violation of laws, norms and ethics. He has kept money not only in his head but also in his heart which is the cause of his alienated death.

Excerpt 6

"They drove rapidly to within a few doors of the place, where a second detective on guard across the street approached" (299).

ANALYSIS

The excerpt mentioned above claims the semantically beautiful lexical unit in which the lexeme 'place' is used by Theodore Dreiser. The line shows immoral activity for which the characters are isolated from the rest of society. Isolation is a source for their emotional satisfaction for which they change their place so that nobody can disturb them. The lexeme 'place' is used for direction of a desired spot where the characters cut off from the people around them.

Excerpt 7

"He liked her in those colours; the thought of a large fireplace flaming with solid lengths of cord-wood, and Lillian snuggling in his arms, gripped his immature imagination" (64).

ANALYSIS

The excerpt mentioned above is rich in epithets; expressing the quality to attribute characteristics of a person. Closed compound, 'fireplace' is used by the novelist in a very convincing manner to produce a new grammatical unit with a semantic touch. The pastoral picture which is portrayed through words is remarkable, especially for Frank Cowperwood, the protagonist in *The Financier* (1912). As fireplace is a source of heat and satisfaction in winter season similarly, Lillian Semple is a source of emotional satisfaction for the protagonist.

CONCLUSION

Place plays a key role in personality development. There is a restricted use of 'place' in *The Financier* (1912), *Trilogy of Desire* which represent not only home and area but also used in other associate senses. The same lexeme is used in open compound, closed compound and hyphenated compound for the purpose of new grammatical and semantic versions. The lexical meaning is identified in the research article while the contextual meanings are interpreted for result oriented conclusion. Figures of speech having the lexeme 'place' is also identified and explained in the text for the purpose of semantic variations. This research also provides space to future scholar to select another lexeme for identification and interpretation in the same text by applying another theoretical framework.

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