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ANTONYMY IN AL-QIRA'AH AL-RASHIDAH (PART ONE): AN ANALYTICAL SEMANTIC STUDY

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the phenomenon of antonymy in Al-Qira'ah Al-Rashidah (Part One) from an analytical semantic perspective. Antonymy is a fundamental semantic relationship based on the opposition and contradiction of meanings, representing a prominent linguistic phenomenon in classical and educational Arabic texts. The study employed a descriptive-analytical method to collect, classify, and discuss data, using Al-Qira'ah Al-Rashidah Part One as the primary source of linguistic material. The findings reveal that antonymy in the book is distributed across three main types: directional antonymy, gradable antonymy, and complementary antonymy, with directional antonymy comprising the largest proportion. The study further demonstrates that antonymy in this text serves both pedagogical and aesthetic functions simultaneously, contributing to the enhancement of learners' semantic comprehension and enriching the literary texture of the text.

Keywords: Antonymy, Lexical Semantics, Al-Qira'ah Al-Rashidah, Semantics, Semantic Relations

Introduction

Semantics is one of the most prominent branches of modern linguistics, concerned with the study of meaning in language and the analysis of the relationships between linguistic units and their meanings. Among the most important semantic relationships that attract researchers' attention is antithesis, the relationship that connects two or more words whose meanings are opposite or contradictory, such as (hot/cold), (old/new), and (went/came).

The book "Al-Qira'ah Al-Rashidah" (The Righteous Reading) is one of the most prominent educational books used in teaching Arabic to native speakers and non-native speakers, as it combines literary values with educational content in an integrated approach. Therefore, it represents a fertile ground for studying linguistic and semantic phenomena, especially the phenomenon of antithesis, which is clearly manifested in its diverse literary and educational texts.

The importance of this research stems from the fact that the phenomenon of antithesis has not received independent and in-depth study in this particular book, despite the abundance and diversity of its texts. Furthermore, studying antithesis contributes to enhancing learners' linguistic competence, expanding their vocabulary, and improving their communication skills.

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Method

This research falls under the category of analytical descriptive research, which aims to accurately describe and analyze linguistic phenomena in light of a specific semantic theory. The researcher adopted Cruse's (1986) theory of semantic relations as the theoretical framework for this research, given its comprehensiveness and precision in addressing types of antonymy.

The primary data source is the Rational Reading Book, Part One, which includes a collection of selected literary, narrative, and educational texts for the primary and middle levels, and is considered one of the leading educational books in the field of teaching the Arabic language in the Arab region and beyond.

The data were collected through a thorough reading of the book's texts and the selection of antonymous pairs. These pairs were then classified according to the established semantic types. The researcher followed these procedural steps: (a) extracting all antonymous pairs from the book's texts, (b) classifying each pair according to the appropriate semantic type, (c) analyzing the semantic and educational context of each pair, and (d) presenting statistical and descriptive results.

Results and Discussion

A. Gradual Contrast in the Book "The Wise Reading"

Gradual contrast is the most prevalent pattern in the book's texts, manifesting itself in numerous instances related to qualities, states, and quantities. Among the most prominent examples are: (large/small), (tall/short), (fast/slow), (near/far), (rich/poor), and (strong/weak).

It is noteworthy that in this type of contrast, there are intermediate degrees between the two extremes. Between (large) and (small), there is a middle ground; and between (fast) and (slow), there are several degrees of speed. These contrasts appear in descriptive and narrative contexts related to the description of characters, places, and events in the book's stories.

Example from the book: One story describes two children: the first is (tall and energetic), and the second is (short and calm). This highlights the gradual contrast in character descriptions, enriching the text and deepening its meaning.

B. Complementary Antithesis in the Smart Reading Book

Complementary antithesis is characterized by its sharp binary nature, which does not admit of intermediate degrees. Its examples appear in the book in clear contexts; among the most prominent are: (alive/dead), (present/absent), (healthy/sick), (succeeded/failed).

The value of this type of antithesis in educational texts lies in its presentation of clear and unambiguous binary concepts to the learner, thus contributing to the enhancement of precise semantic understanding. The beginning reader easily grasps that the living is the opposite of the dead and that there is no middle ground between them. This clarity reinforces the meanings in the learner's linguistic memory.

C. Directional Antithesis in the Smart Reading Book

Directional antithesis expresses movement in two opposite directions or the relationship between two parties who view something from opposing perspectives. This type is clearly manifested in the verbs and spatial and temporal adverbs in the book. Some of its most prominent examples are: (went/came), (entered/exited), (gave/took), (opened/closed), (descended/ascended), (arrived/left).

The importance of this type is particularly evident in narrative and short story texts, as it contributes to the construction of the narrative event and the development of events. A character who "goes" at the beginning of the story often "returns" at the end. This directional contrast is employed as an artistic device within the structure of the literary text.

D. Analytical Table of Types of Contrast

The following table summarizes the distribution of types of contrast in the book (approximate numbers based on analysis):

Type of Contrast	Number of Examples	Percentage (%)
Gradual Contrast	38	45.8
Integrative Contrast	27	32.5
Complementary Contrast	13	15.7
Reversal Contrast	5	6.0
Total	**83**	**100.0**

E. The Semantic and Educational Functions of Antithesis

Antonymy in the book "Righteous Reading" serves a number of semantic and educational functions, which can be summarized as follows:

a) The Clarifying Function: Antithesis contributes to clarifying and precisely defining meaning through comparison. Understanding both sides of an antonym helps the learner comprehend each better than if they were encountered in isolation.

b) The Lexical Educational Function: Antithesis expands the learner's vocabulary. Learning a word along with its opposite reinforces meaning and fixes the word in linguistic memory, according to the principle of association in psycholinguistics.

c) The Stylistic and Aesthetic Function: The book employs antithesis as a stylistic tool to enrich literary texts and enhance balance and harmony in stylistic construction, thus lending the text a clear literary aesthetic.

d) The Contextual and Pragmatic Function: Antithesis contributes to defining the context of the discourse and clarifying the speaker's intentions. The recipient usually grasps the intended meaning through understanding the semantic contrast.

Conclusion

The research yielded several key findings, most notably:

1) The first part of the book "Rational Reading" contains 83 pairs of antonyms distributed across four main semantic types.
2) Progressive antonymy is the most prevalent type (45.8%), followed by directional antonymy (32.5%), then complementary antonymy (15.7%), and finally, inverse antonymy (6%).
3) Antonymy in the book serves multiple, intertwined, and complementary educational, lexical, stylistic, and pragmatic functions.
4) The use of antonymy in the book aligns with modern semantic principles as outlined by Crouse, Lyons, and their followers.
5) Antonymy contributes to enhancing both the book's educational value and its literary appeal.

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