

An Analytic Study of Iraqi EFL Undergraduate Students' Use of Related Terms in English Poetry

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ABSTRACT

The current work aims at investigating Iraqi EFL undergraduate students' abilities to use the technically linguistic terms as employed in poetry to show their stylistic competence in this respect. Accordingly, the study in question is classified into two parts in accordance with the linguistic field to which these terms belong: **Semantically-related terms** and **Pragmatically-related terms**.

In order to reinforce the students' performance in this paradigm, a two-part questionnaire is designated for a sample of (200) subjects in the 4th year classes of English Department, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Baghdad to come up with real evidence that represents the learners' linguistic knowledge and use of poetic terms. The first part of the questionnaire is meant for the perception and the second for production with the hope this test will achieve its conclusions.

INTRODUCTION

Following Sequeira et al. (2009: 14), poetry is the art by which feeling is conveyed by author to reader in metrical languages. Defined as the imagination and passions, poetry is the beauty of the world and a matter of sensations and emotions, conveying the internal world of reality objectively in terms of words and linguistic models. As a result, the reader is highly captivated by poetry, admiring the person who produces it since it purifies the audience to get acknowledged with processes and events involved into the make-up of a poem. Such a wonderful impression is engendered thanks to the semantic and the pragmatic devices that a poet uses in his/her poem.

According to Yeganeh (2013: 210), the poet's work is to make new impersonations in the reader's mind arising from the images used in his/her poem. Hence, the poet is considered as a seer who suggests, rather than names, objects on the behalf of the reader whose personal attitude and mood are ready to accept the new images provoked by the poet. In this regard, the writer of a poem would make sensuous reverie in the reader's mentality so that the latter admits the magical images newly created and aroused by virtue of the poet's words that are deftly. Seen as amalgamation of various emotions and sensations alongside other images of love, sadness, excitement and disappointments, the poet's language is not descriptive, but a sequence of symbols and words that trigger sentimental and delicate atmosphere on the part of the reader and audience, having nothing to do with objective description and didacticism in line with what Yeganeh (2013: 211) says of human being as living in "a forest of symbols".

SEMANTICALLY-EMPLOYED LABELS

Some of the linguistic labels that are employed in poetry fall within the circle of semantics, cognitive semantics, in particular, which depend for its analysis on regarding the representing of the terms under examination and analysis. In other words, those terms' analysis requires reference to the body; personification, in particular, is only interpreted

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with respect to the human body because human features are given to non-human entities. The same thing is accounted for other sub-branches of semantics (Simpson, 2004: 33-5).

The Semantic-Based Term 'Oxymoron'

This semantic term 'oxymoron' is defined as juxtaposition of two expressions that display semantic incompatibility. Namely, the expressions juxtaposed do not share mutual semantic characteristics at all (Rajimwale, 2004: 3011). In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, one comes across the statement "Parting is a *sweet sorrow*" where the two words (sweet and sorrow) do not show similarity in meaning when used apart from the context. However, the phrase in question is meaningful once placed in the context because amalgamation of joy in some other examples of oxymoron lie in *cold fire*, *bright smoke*, *heavy lightness* is quite common in our daily life.

Morner and Rausch (2018: 210) define oxymoron is a speech figure where two juxtaposed linguistic entities show contradiction to each other, arguing that this linguistic system, which is deliberately made as a type of novelty of a certain concept, aggravates a strong influence on the part of the reader. According to Richards and Schmitt (1982: 91) argue that oxymoron functions to get the audience paid attention to a situation that cannot be labeled and accentuates the values of contradiction involved in emotional context; many writers have used this speech figure, in particular, in conservative societies to encode powerful and effective messages. One of Tolstoy's publications is entitled as "A Living Corpse", a powerful and effective expression that renders the reader pause for a while to consider the meaning of such an oxymorinous content involved. Similarly, the powerful personification of oxymoron is suited in its provocative sensibility which coincides with the poem's rhythm to punctuate an idea. In support of such interpretation, Chaunya (2010: 11) affirms the duality of a concept, object or a phenomenal expression resulting from oxymoron; "Poor Millionaires". For instance, is a title of a novel written by Robert and Kimpur which shows a contrastive concept. On the other hand, this phenomenal expression is meaningful because it is understood as considering that the rich people in the novel in question are poor in spite of accumulating a significant amount of money because their money doubled their responsibility and, Accordingly, they were unhappy with their lives, empty of pleasure and relaxation.

The Semantic-Based Term 'Personification'

Personification is defined as a figure of speech where an object, an animal or a thought is taken some human characteristics. Seen as a literary means, personification makes writers and poets to produce life and human activities in non-human beings for it sparks effective reaction and influence on the behalf of the reader. Furthermore, personification makes the poet to visualize some elements of the poem more clearly. In other words, it is considered as a way of motivation since it triggers many rudiments turning up in cities, continents, seasons of the year, months, winds and other natural phenomena. Consequently, there is a picture created by virtue of personification in the reader's mind to relate what is mentioned to the referent intended. Exemplified in *The snow whispered as it fell to the ground*, personification serves as an entertaining and creative technique employed by the poet in order to get the reader fascinated, ruling out the boredom and monotony (Alexander, 1965: 20). To put things differently, personification is considered as a part of the reader to condense him/her stick to the theme of the poem and the topic under scrutiny. In the same way, personification brings about the reader's suspense required in the poem, keeping him/her in the track the poet essentially sets up to develop the theme (Goosens, 2003: 270).

Defined as a device for simplifying comprehensive of a certain entity or phenomenon, personification is intended to provide the described ideas concrete basis so as for the reader to get access to the thoughts and objects under discussion (Leech and Short, 2008: 20). Therefore, personification draws upon the agentless entities which are thought of as an agent as in *"My car refuses to start this morning"*. In consequence, Lakoff and Johnson (1983: 25) define personification as "an ontological metaphor encompassing a cross-domain projection in which an entity or idea is imputed human features".

Eventually, personification, like metaphor, has two fields where mapping should be made between two members, one from each, are to be compared. One of these fields involves human characteristics while the other non-human units, strongly referred to as source and target respectively, which can be represented by the following example:

She studied medicine, you know? Like it was her enemy (ibid.)

The utterance above which is viewed as a rich example of personification, can be designed as follows:



Figure (1): Personification (Adopted by Lakoff and Johnson, 1983: 25)

The Semantic-Related Term 'Metonymy'

As a mental process, occurring in a single conceptual area, metonymy is concerned with the meaning that is caused by virtue of relatedness as in *'They have a hand in it'* (Rajimwale, 2004: 236). In this example, the word 'hand' has a metonymous sense associated with a human being. According to Yule (2006, 125), metonymy is understood in a part-whole relation as in the pairs *wheel/car, roof/house, juice/can, crown/king*, etc., a trope referred to as synecdoche alternatively, this trope can be conceived of in terms of a location representing the institution or the official who houses it, e.g., *'The white House announces his determination to fight terrorism everywhere in the world'*, where white house represents the American president. Moreover, metonymy is caused by means of a producer and the produced relation, e.g., *'Have you read the new Kate Atkinson?'*, an utterance in which *'the new Kate Atkinson'* refers to a literary work issued by the well-known British authoress (Simpson, 2004: 47).

Concerning the difference between metaphor and metonymy, one can say that the former concerns itself with a certain distance between the sources (target and source) it alludes to, the latter up-scales certain outstanding features from a single domain to represent that domain as a whole (ibid.). The proverb that reads *"The pen is mightier than the sword"*, for example, represents a metonymic expression because the 'pen' represents the written word and the 'sword' stands for armies and, therefore, the proverb as a whole can be analyzed as the written words are more powerful and effective than the armies which have weaponries and ammunition.

It is necessary to say that some metonymic expressions are very conventionalized due to their wide-ranging use in our everyday life that language users no longer think of them as metonymy. For example, those who are so interested in music cannot think of strings as a metonymic symbol for a musical instrument when they come across such an utterance as *'The strings are too quiet'*. The language employer's knowledge of metonymy depends greatly on contextual elements and shared knowledge in addition to inference. Another example that displays conventionality comes from the British mid-fielder who considers his team's fans who have not actively encouraged the team as *'prawn sandwich'*, a term which is later on employed for any set of supporters (Yule, 2006: 126).

The Semantic-Based Label 'Motif'

Defined as a repeating image recurrently found throughout the literary works, including poetry, a motif serves to uphold the deep meaning that the poet or novelist tries to accentuate (Baldic, 2008: 195-6).

In his novella entitled *'Hills Like White Elephants'* Hemingway, for example, expresses this figure of speech when two of his fictional characters, while waiting for a train at a station, talk about weather, drinks and how the hills in Spain are similar to white elephants to reinforce the main topic raised in the story in question. It follows that motif in this story and other literary works consists in many activities and conversational actions and turns that fictional characters perform in a bid to foster and strengthen the main theme involved (ibid.).

Following Abrams and Harpham (2012: 229), a motif is perceived as an event, device, reference or a symbol happening recurrently in literary works; the 'loathly lady' who morphs into a pretty woman by virtue of a kiss from a man is seen as a motif in *folklore*, and the man fascinated by a fairy woman serves as a motif adopted from folklore in *'Keat's Ballad'* whose title is *'La BellC Dame sans Merci'* in 1820, two motifs who share 'where – are' formula in admonishing the disappeared past (Hawthorn, 1994: 121-2).

Characterized by its symbolic essence, motif serves to accentuate the images and symbols that constitute its make-up which, in turn, contributes substantially to support and enhance the theme involved in a poem or a literary work. It is claimed that two criteria should be considered in the identification of a motif: recurrence and unavoidability where the former refers to a motif irrespective of the number of times, this device exists while the latter draws upon the contextual variables determining the motif identified. Additionally, the coherence of the elements demands that the motif should be taken into account in line with the principle that states the more relevant the components of a motif, the more unified the impact of the motif. Consequently, motif can be manifested by any repeated symbol ranging from a sound to image or event and the like; in 'Slaughter House' a novel written by Vonnegut, for instance, the utterance "so it goes" is echoed so many times to be specified a motif with symbolic importance associated with the theme of death as an inevitable end to human beings (ibid.).

The Semantic-Based Term 'Pleonasm'

Following Myrers and Mukasch (2003: 279), pleonasm is a figure of speech where repetition of an idea takes place by different forms or different syntactic structures, a verb, for example, can be reflected by an adverbial as in the following sentence: '**I saw it with my own eyes**', where the prepositional phrase "**with my eyes**" that functions as an adverbial is identical in semantic content to the verb "**saw**"; that is to say, the adverbial phrase is surplus in the example sentence in question because it offers no new information (ibid.).

As a form of redundancy, pleonasm is regarded as a bad style since repetition is an undesirable habit particularly in writing and, therefore, teachers often ask their students to abandon it. On the other hand, pleonastic forms serve as an emphatic device that one cannot make up for. In addition, it functions to keep on communication between interlocutors involved in a communicative event when the parts of linguistic messages sent are distorted; that is to say, the receiver can depend on pleonasm to restore the deleted elements of a distorted pleonastic message so as to properly understand and respond what lost or unclear (Glucksberg, 1995: 8).

Cruse (2007: 130) contends that pleonasm is inherent syntactically and semantically, arguing that syntactic pleonasm is manifested by repeating a subject in such spoken sentences as '**That man, he can play on Sunday**'. Additionally, double affirmation, stresses Crystal (2003: 387), is a type of pleonasm where there auxiliary (do) as in '**I do come early**' is superfluous. On the semantic level, when the meaning of one word is mentioned elsewhere on the same sentence, e.g., '**Michael Jordan, it is claimed, is a famous superstar**' in which 'superstar' has the same meaning as 'famous'. By the same token, pleonasm is grounded in what is referred to as prolixity, which is seen as the mention of elements that are not worth mentioning as in '**They are four species: two non-different species are dealing with one single phenomenon**'. Here the word 'different' in the example above is of no semantic content because its meaning is included in the word 'species' and, consequently, should be not raised.

Looked at from another angle, pleonasm violates the quality maxim that is proposed by Grice (1975) because it provides more information that is needed. However, it is acceptable in literature. The researcher considers what Shakespeare said in this regard in his 'Twelfth Night':

Clown: "**If he mends, he no longer dishonest**

if he cannot, let the botcher mend it

Anything that is mended is best patched"

Here the clown introduces pleonasm inherent in the italicized line above to explain what is contained in the word '**botcher**'.

PRAGMATICALLY-EMPLOYED LABELS

There are a number of linguistic terms, which are pragmatically related terms, that poets writers try to employ in their literary works and contributions to poetry because of their communicative significance. According to Mulken (2004: 117), poets adopted two kinds of figures of speech: 'tropes' and 'schemes', emphasizing heavily that the former is more important than the latter because it implies many various types that are greatly related to pragmatic character of linguistic expressions in which these tropes take place. Equally important, he (ibid.) categorizes tropes into two classifications: 'destabilization' and 'substitution', confirming that the former classification depends on the indeterminacy and flexibility of the meaning of a linguistic construction in its context. This kind implies *metaphor*, *pun*, and *irony*.

The second classification of substitution, McQuarrie and Mick (1998: 454) concede, includes *hyperbole*, *litotes*, and *metonymy*. This type is proposed to spark more processing on the behalf of the reader/listener to get the writer/speaker's intended meaning. The following sub-sections would be a detailed analysis of the tropes aforementioned along with illustrative examples where necessary.

Many years ago, pragmatics was scarcely raised by linguists and is seen as a waste basket into which it is stuffed what is not accounted for by means of grammar. Nowadays, pragmatics is flourished and it becomes an independent branch of linguistics that cannot be overlooked since it addresses so many phenomena with regard to language use in communication. Pragmatics emerges as a reaction to the limitations of semantics in analysing sentences by dint of their truth conditions; a sentence like '*Close the door*' cannot be assessed as true nor false and, hence, proponents of pragmatics analyse such types of sentences by means of felicity conditions which will be discussed later on in this study (Leech, 1983: 9-11).

Looked at from another angle, pragmatics zeros in on the speaker's intended meaning. Alternatively defined, pragmatics pertains to the contextual meaning, meaning that is context-bound as opposed to context-free meaning. Stated otherwise, pragmatics is after what is unsaid rather than what is said, and, therefore, speakers are entitled to be armed with linguistic knowledge and non-linguistic knowledge as well in order to grasp and decipher the linguistic messages encoded in linguistic utterances. Worded differently, language users are required to depend for their interpretation upon assumptions, expectations to construct and understand linguistic messages (Yule, 2006: 114).

Accordingly, pragmatics is to be described as reading between lines since it pays more attention to language use and function; that is to say it has nothing to do with formal properties of language and linguistic competence which is accentuated by Chomsky (1965) as a defining feature of language user. Instead, pragmatics underscores communicative competence as an indispensable factor contributing to the native speaker's development in using language by mastering non-linguistic variables that enhance his/her understanding and formation of linguistic expressions (Leech, 1983: 14-15).

Following Aitchison (1999), there is a fine line of demarcation between pragmatics and discourse analysis, an assumption which depends on the premises that both disciplines draw upon the speaker's communicative intent in determining the shape and content of the linguistic messages conveyed though the latter underscores the texture of the message and the former emphasizes the restoration of missing elements.

The Pragmatic-Based Term 'Metaphor'

According to Simpson (2004: 53), metaphor is simply considered as a comparison between two different conceptual areas, namely 'target' and 'source' ones, with the former concerned with the concept that metaphor triggers and the latter the topic we depend on to produce a metaphorical expression. This notion may be exemplified by the linguistic expression '*She blew her lid*' where the target source can be spelt out as "*anger*" because it is the notion the speaker is after in metaphor, while the source domain can be recognised as "heated flood in a container" for it is the concept that supplies the vehicle for the transference responsible for creating metaphor (ibid: 42).

As a source of creativity and novelty, metaphor abounds in poetry; Thomas Gray, for instance, says "a grief ago", a phrase which cannot be accounted for literally because "ago", as an adverb of time, can only collocate with words pertaining to time like 'days', 'months', etc. In a consequence, the audience uses his imagination for a metaphorical interpretation of the phrase at issue to arrive at such an explanation as "the unhappy time following a sad event" (Fromkin, et al. 2007: 183).

It is worth mentioning that metaphoric expressions, because of their extensive use in various occasions and situations, get so familiarized that language users later on do not think of them as having metaphorical interpretations and use them unconsciously like any other ordinary expressions. Such constructions as "**it escapes me**", "**I can't follow**", "**petticoat government**", etc. are no longer thought of as metaphorical expressions due to their enormous recurrence in our daily use of language, a development that causes them to lose its metaphorical content. On the other hand, metaphorical expressions are favoured in literature, especially poetry, because of its more creative and less clear for the audience and the reader to decipher (Rajimwale, 2004: 230).

The Pragmatic-Related Label 'Simile'

Following Alexander (1965: 21), simile is an explicit comparison which is linguistically realized by means of 'as' or 'like' as in Robert Burns's line in well-known poem 'A red, Red Rose' that says "**O My Luve is like red, red rose**".

Included in metaphor and seen as a part of it is simile which is seen as a figure of speech and a literary trope poets, orators and laymen use in their contributions in a specific communicative situation on a particular occasion to bring about equivalency between two objects, actions or events. Interestingly enough, simile can produce an overt comparison between two things which are dissimilar from one another such that their comparability is not possible as in "this poem is like a punch in the gut" (ibid.). similarly, simile can be detected in the response of a child, who first tastes custard when he says "it is like a drink". The same baby's verbal response consists in his utterance "It is like my grandmam's walking stick" once described the letter 'J' he first observes on a keyboard (Bloor and Bloor, 2009: 72).

Simpson (2004: 43) contends that simile is an affective trope serving as a useful test to differentiate and discriminate between metaphor and metonymy. Worded differently, when confusion arises as to whether an expression such as 'The regime is finished' (said by a newspaper on the War on Iraq in 2003) is a metonymic or metaphorical construction, the solution one resorts to is to convert the utterance into simile which depicts the relationship as metaphor by means of the 'IS LIKE formula'. In this way, the resultant utterance that proves the metaphorical essence of the statement at hand would be something like this:

'The process of crashing the regime is like coming to end'.

The Pragmatic-Based Term 'Meronymy'

As a fundamental kind of lexical relationship drawing upon part-whole relation, meronymy is a linguistic label widely employed in literary language including poetry. Following Halliday and Hassan (1989: 81-5), meronymy discusses part-whole relationships that are organised in a hierarchical way; *limb* and *root*, which are meronomic elements, are regarded as co-meronyms for the superordinate *tree*. It is widely held that meronymy is a topic which is supposed to be discussed within Halliday (ibid.)'s theory of transitivity that recommends that this figure of speech acts as a substitution of a body part of the human being for the role of an *actor*, *sensor*, *sayer*, etc. (linguistic terms created by Halliday in his transitivity greatly approach to semantic roles). One example, comes from the use of *hands* in the sentence:

"We need more hands to finish the project", where (*hands*) represents *people* (ibid.).

Following Lyons (1977: 87-7), there are two kinds of meronymy necessary and optional. The former can be illustrated by the inevitable connection between the part and the whole as in *eye/face* pair and the latter does not presupposes such a connection as in *cushion/chair* pair since some chairs have no cushions. Interestingly enough, meronymy can consist in caricature simply because caricature portrays a distorted variant of some parts of man. Some artists render the nose as a pointed form to imply that the face of the person criticized is no longer welcomed by the audience (Simpson, 2004: 44). He (ibid.) emphasizes that caricature is a detextual form dealt with semiotically, emphasizing the close affinity between it and meronymy.

The Pragmatic-Based Term 'Hyperbole'

Following Cruce (2007: 80), hyperbole, which is also terms as overstatement deliberately expresses the positive or negative exaggeration in an attempt to deepen the influence on the behalf of the reader. Pragmatically analyzed as infringement of quality maxim proposed by Grice (1975), hyperbole is a common phenomenon used in all walks of life and in our daily use of language. This strategy, Leech (1983: 145) argues, is justified because it is associated with the possibility of gradual telling of truth; that is to say, truth is not a matter of X or Y, but it can be told in degrees. As such one can consider *You made my blood boil* as a hyperbole since the speaker does not observe the truthfulness (quality) maxim.

Described as a figure of speech that encompasses the force of powerful emotion, hyperbole is an effective device designated to arouse the audience's emotion concerning a certain phenomenon, maximizing the size of the action or event under discussion. In his poem 'Scorching Trails', James Tate says "*She scorched you with her radiance*" to describe his sweet-heart's phenomenal beauty, and this exaggerated description stirs up the readers' latent emotions and broadens this characteristic by expanding its merits and this sentence, accordingly, can be spelt out as "You are greatly influenced by her charming beauty" (Claridge, 2010: 57-9). Furthermore, he (ibid.) remarks that hyperbole is a type of figurative language which is more extreme than what is devoted by the state of affairs, arguing that it is indicative of exaggeration, a shift from the denotation of the topic or idea described to the speaker's intention of expression due to the importance of what is talked about as in '*It took him a whole day to type three words*' which suggest the writer's feeble ability to type quickly.

In poetry, hyperbole is a basic component of the content of a poem to incite ever-lasting passion, love, feelings of intimacy or despair via amplifying the reader's imaginative powers and enthusiastic desires. For instance, Homer, in his epics, opts for hyperbole to maximize and deepen the influence of the described actions about which he prolongs talking. In the Iliad, Homer said that god Mars cried out as loudly as nine or ten thousand men', an exaggeration that is easily detected by the reader since it is impossible for a single man to create such a noisy action. However, such an amplified cry is depicted as so due to the way the poet feels from the bottom of his heart.

The Pragmatic-Based Label 'Irony'

Defined as a 'discordance' between what is openly articulated and what is really meant (Xing, 2008: 5), irony is brewing controversy since there is no unanimous agreement over its character. In general, irony is formulated when the speaker over-characterizes an action, event and/or evaluative decision in a bid to stick to politeness principle which all speakers do their best not to refrain from.

According to Leech (1983: 142), irony is an alternative to impoliteness and such an insincere technique is realized by flouting the quality maxim, which is proposed by Grice (1975), as in 'Don't mind me, will you?' When directed to someone that has already barged into the speaker. This concept is reinforced by Grice (1975: 53) who maintains that irony is endangered when violation of conversational maxim occurs, insisting that the intended meaning conveyed by the speaker concerning irony impels the listener to search for an extra interpretation other than the literal meaning. That is to say, the hearer believes that the speaker would say something true and information-bearing, but when the latter says something false, the former can generate one or more interpretations by obviously violating the co-operative principle to communicate something else that is to grasp by the hearer on the basis on the contextual factors alongside the background and assumption that the participants share (ibid.).

Following Reyes et al. (2012: 2-3), irony is typified by two variables: the pragmatic mechanism by which an ironic utterance is made and the kind of the person against whom the proposed action is obviously directed or the person other than the addressee the intended attack is waged against (third party), affirming that this trope is typified by its secret character between the speaker and the addressee and the receiver is invited to understand the communicative values involved in this ironic utterance. The secret implied in ironic utterance is motivated by politeness, to which all people make appeal; that is to say, rendering the ironic expressions secret, especially with respect to their proposition, would finally get the speaker free from hostile reactions by the addressee since there were no direct insults or offenses are made.

Furthermore, approached differently, irony is an essential topic over which identity there is a hotly controversial debate among linguists and scholars and, hence, there is a pressing need for its analysis (Mey, 2006: 406). Consequently, it can be semantically approached when it is thought of as saying something to mean the opposite of what is uttered. Being so, this semantic-based interpretation by lexical substitution as in 'What a lovely day', when said on a day which is stormy to be recognized as lexical irony since the original meaning of the utterance above can be recalled by word substitution (e.g. 'lovely', 'for', 'awful'). That is to say, this type of irony stands in contrastive relations.

Related to this oppositeness character of irony is the mention theory which states that an utterance is ironic when it is seen as the echoic representation of another utterance. As such, '*You've been a great help!*', said to someone whose deeds and words cause problems for you; i.e. the ironic remark is the one that repeats some or all words of another one with the aim of making fun of what is said by the first speaker (Cruse, 2007: 90). Consider the following exchange between two persons talking about a lazy manager called Mazin:

A. Mazin is an active manager. B. Mazin's activity is so obvious.

B's echoic response is taken to be an ironic expression. However, the semantic approach to irony is inoffensive and most linguists see it is suitable to tackle it from a pragmatic perspective, viz, co-operative principle and its supportive maxims proposed by Grice (1975) just because irony is mostly envisioned as violation of the maxim of quality; 'Don't mind me, will you?', for instance, is an ironic expression when said to someone who has just barged into the speaker. Likewise, 'Do you have to spill the ash on the carpet?' is another ironic construction with the speaker's intention that the addressee is unable to abandon the fault at issue. By the same token, irony can be triggered by breaching the quantity maxim; the ironic sentence said by Mark Twain, the great American writer, 'Some of his words were not Sunday school words' is spelt out as "one expects that all his words are Sunday school words, but this expectation is not true as some of them are not so" (Leech, 1983: 142-3).

The Pragmatic-Based Label 'Pun'

Drawing on the humorous way of word use, pun is concerned with utilization of words that exhibit homonymy, homophony or polysemy in their relationship (Bussmann, 1996: 968). For instance, the word 'bank', Yule (2006) contends, is one form but with more one meaning; 'bank' may refer to a 'financial institution' in one sense of it, and to 'river shore' in another. Here, the context interferes to settle this conflict in meaning by ruling one of their senses out as an inappropriate one and consolidating the other as a contextually operative option.

Hailed as a foregrounded feature mainly used in literary language, pun impels the reader for further processing to arrive at the poet's intended meaning; that is to say, more interpretations of a certain word would emerge and it is the receiver's duty to erase the absurd meaning, inculcating the meaning which fits in the context of poem. Such search for the designated meaning will be of interest to the reader removing the banal and prosy flatness that the reader might encounter in the process of ongoing interpretation (Rajimwale, 2004: 242-3). The following lines that are adopted from Shakespeare's Richards II exhibit this trope successfully:

Surrey: *Dishonourable boy!*

That lie shall lie in my sword.

Here the word 'lie' has two senses: in the former use in the second line above it is taken to mean 'to tell something untrue' while in the latter use it is understood as 'the position where the boy rest' (ibid: 242).

In support of these claims aforementioned, Simpsons (2004: 45-6) argues that pun, as a form of word-play, involves a linguistic feature that integrates two or more unrelated meanings, affirming that this trope is not necessarily confined within the limits of individual words but it can be realized across word boundaries. Assuming this phenomenon as a chance-connection, pun, he (ibid.) points out, sometimes makes a link between two different levels of linguistic organization. This is largely manifested in famous hairdressing saloons titles in Belfast like "Curl up Dye" where the word 'dye' is either meant 'paint' or as opposite to 'live', a procedure that results in the punning character of this word. Similarly, the word 'Shylock', which is also a name of a saloon, either refers to one of the outstanding fictional characters in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, or pertains to 'locks of hair'.

The Pragmatic-Based Term 'Litotes'

Frequently known as 'understatement', *litotes* is defined as a pragmatic strategy employed for an ironic comment, in particular by using a negative utterance to indicate the opposite meaning of what is said. Being so, the utterance 'I shan't be sorry when it is over' to be interpreted as 'I shall be very glad when it is over'. Similarly, the utterance 'It was no easy matter' when issued in an appropriate context is to be taken as 'It was very difficult' (Hornby, 1974: 503).

Hornby (1974)'s definition is reinforced by Webster (2004: 512)'s account on this technique which holds that *litotes* is analyzed as a statement with the scope that does not include the entire truth, leaving a portion of fact uncovered by the utterance, a technique which serves to intensify the reader's awareness of the context and environment in which the utterance is formulated. Here, the audience is required to differentiate between what is said and what the real situation is in order to detect the understatement of what is uttered.

As a trope inciting charm and interest on the behalf of the beholder, *litotes* is indirectly found in the deep structure of poems when the audience connects the meaning of words and stanzas of the written lines with the situation of use, in conjunction with the contextual factors, to decode the understatement signs involved in a poem; the reader saves no effort to differentiate between the right interpretation of a poem and its defective counterpart to spot *litotes* used by the poet (Stageberg, 1952: 121). Consequently, the poem enables the receiver to anticipate what is not said in the poet's description, especially the parts that are not tackled, i.e. the gaps. Hence, this insufficient description suggests understatement (ibid.).

TEST

Defined as a quantitative questionnaire intended to investigate Iraqi EFL learners' use of related terms in poetry, this kind of test, affirms Williams (2013: 17), pertains to investigate, measure, and analyze variables to achieve explicit results. This is frequently achieved by mathematical standards given to the learners' answers in reaction to the question items of the questionnaire. This claim is supported by Johnson and Christenson (2010: 97)'s proposal that quantitative test is used to examine the hypotheses adopted at the first stage of research. Put differently, this type of

study is to be applicable to studying randomly chosen groups selected for this aim, drawing upon certain elements by raising data by means of mathematical values.

In the current study, the questionnaire employed includes two questions: one for perception and the other production. The two questions at hand depend on two linguistic variables: pragmatics and semantics. In other words, the examinees, who are two hundred EFL learners chosen randomly in the Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Kufa from the 4th stage, are asked to answer the questions considering poetry labels (ibid.).

Regarding the validity of the test, the researcher consulted a number of experts (professors whose experience in this respect is outstanding) and their notes are taken into consideration and, the questions are improved and modified consequently since such a technique is valuable and effective in line with what Heaton (1973: 18) recommends when affirming the importance and the role of this procedure.

Concerning the items involved in the questionnaire, the subjects and labels are mostly used from the following resources:

1. Abrams, M. H. and Geoffrey, Galt Harpham (2012). "A Glossary of Literary Terms".
2. Alexander, L. C. (1965). "Poetry and Prose Appreciation for Overseas Students".
3. Rajimwale, Sharad (2004). "Elements of General Linguistics".
4. Simpson, Paul (2004). "Stylistics".

Such a technique emphasizes the content validity of the test at hand because the test items can involve all the main poetry labels intended to be investigated (ibid.).

Regarding the statistical device used, simple calculations and percentages are used to discover the EFL students' faculty to recognise and produce appropriate poetic labels that appropriately fit in the concepts and texts concerned. Before sitting for the test, the testees are requested to feel relaxed and not to write their names. Later on, the subjects deal with the test seriously and have answered comfortably after they are informed that this test is designed and intended for scientific study purposes. The first question, which is designated to find out the learners' recognition of literary labels employed in poetry, comes up with the statistical results that arise in the following Table and Figure:

Item No.	Linguistic Field	Poetic Labels	Number of Right Answers	Percentage %
2	Semantics	Oxymoron	68	34%
4	Semantics	Personification	76	38%
5	Semantics	Meronymy	68	34%
The average of right answers in technically used terms in semantics			70.6	35.3%
1	Pragmatics	Metaphor	34	17%
3	Pragmatics	Hyperbole	18	9%
7	Pragmatics	Pun	26	13%
6	Pragmatics	Litotes	28	14%
The average of right responses in technically used terms in pragmatics			26.5	13.25%

Table (1): Iraqi EFL College Students' Perception of Labels Employed in Poetry

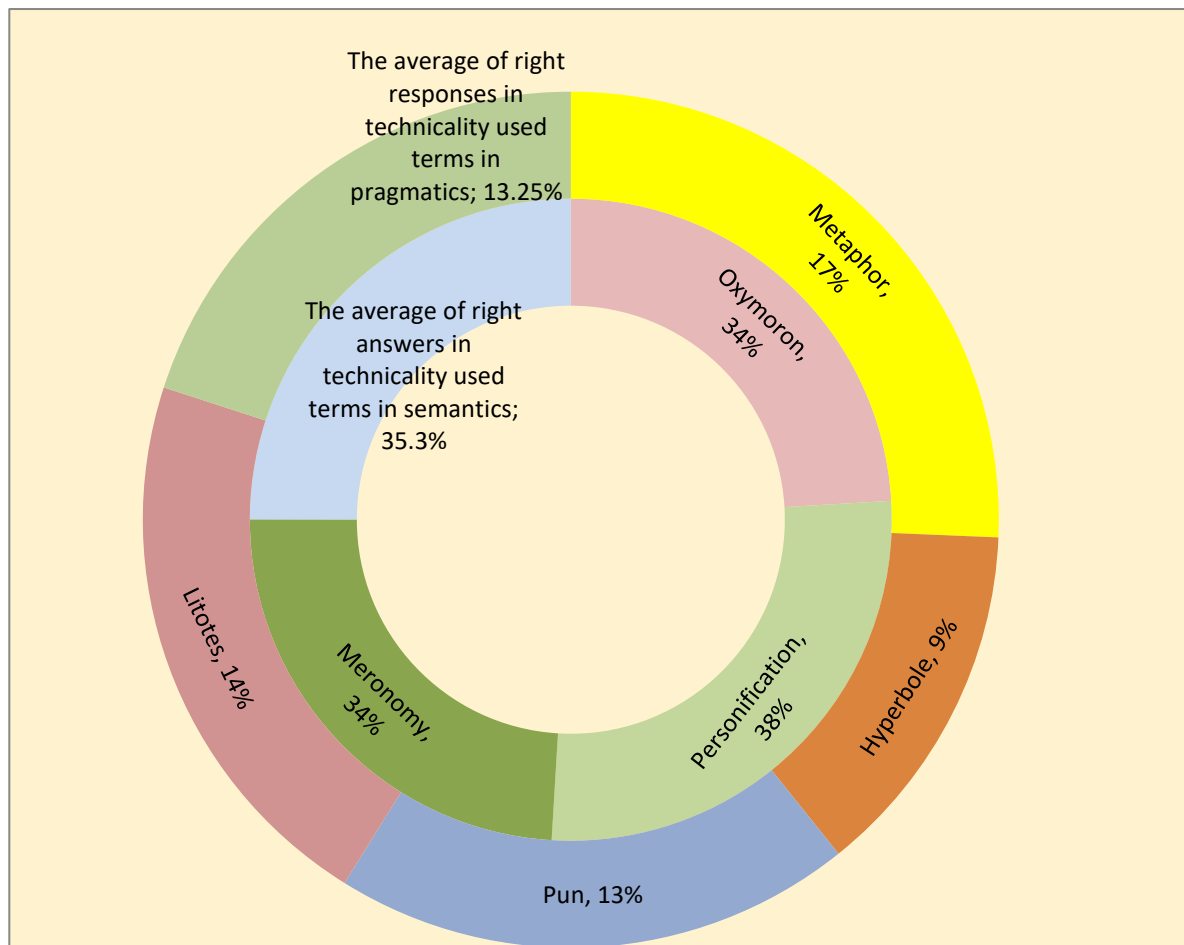


Figure (1): Iraqi EFL College Students' Perception of Labels Employed in Poetry

As far as terms regarding semantics, it has been concluding that the semantic terms: *meronymy* and *oxymoron* represent a daunting challenge for those students and therefore, they have each recorded only (34%) of the right responses. On the contrary, *personification* acquires (38%) of the correct responses by the subjects in question. This deterioration of linguistic faculty pertaining to poetic terms, affirms Chomsky (1965), indicates linguistic incompetence on the part of these learners.

What is worse those learners' imperfect ability in pragmatically-based labels where the marks range between (17% - 9%) of the correct responses, an indication of these students' communicative incompetence. Communicative competence, Yule (2006) argues, is different from linguistic competence. Depending on contextual factors and expectation, pragmatically-related terms are not easily apprehended by university students and such a weakness is verified by the low percentage (13.25%) by which the students in question have made the correct responses. The pragmatically-based term *hyperbole*, as Table (1) and Figure (1) suggest, is the biggest challenge for Iraqi EFL undergraduate students where they can achieve only (9%) of the correct responses.

Concerning the production part, which is revealed in Question Two, Iraqi EFL college learners' performance is quite discouraging as shown in Table (2) and illustrated in Figure (2) below:

Item No.	Linguistic Field	Poetic Labels	Number of Right Responses	Percentage %
5	Semantics	Pleonasm	46	23%
6	Semantics	Oxymoron	46	23%
7	Semantics	Motif	26	13%
The average of right answers in technically used terms in semantics			38	19%
1	Pragmatics	Irony	24	12%
2	Pragmatics	Hyperbole	12	6%
3	Pragmatics	Metaphor	34	17%
4	Pragmatics	Pun	28	14%
The average of right answers in technically used terms in pragmatics			24.5	12.25%

Table (2): Iraqi EFL College Students' Production of Labels Employed in Poetry

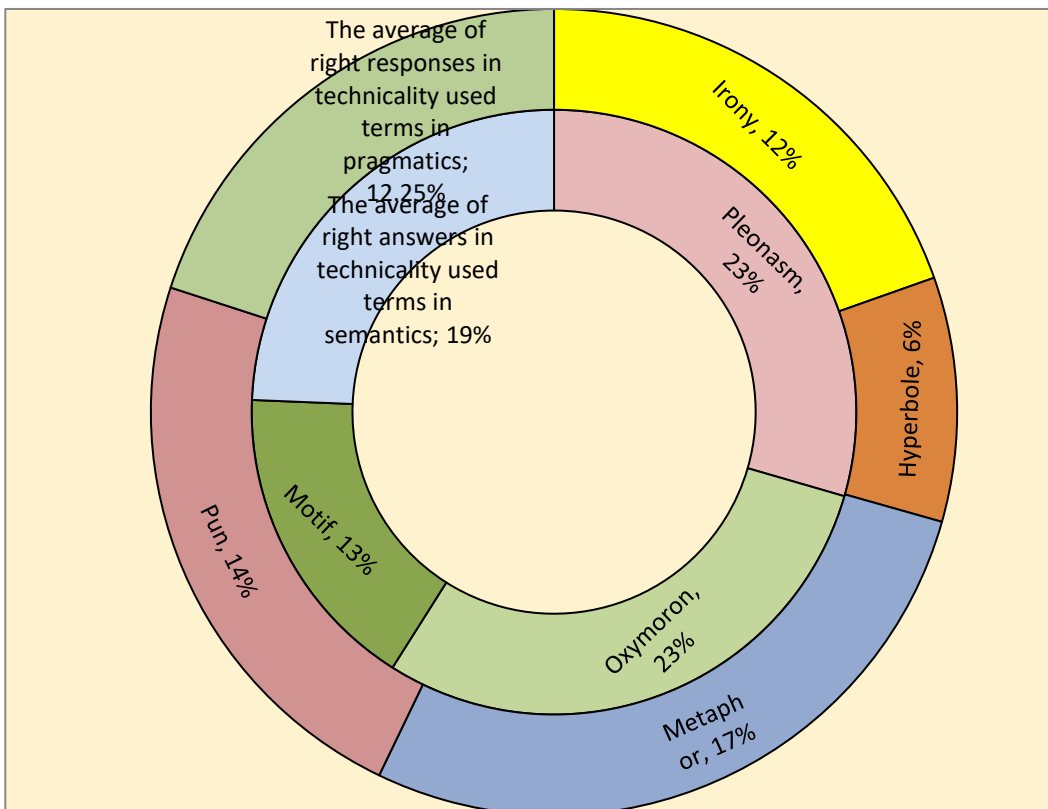


Figure (2): Iraqi EFL College Students' Production of Labels Employed in Poetry

Concerning the linguistic hypothesizes of semantics upon which poetic labels rest, it has been noticed that the learners' ability gets worse in producing the correct labels where only (24.5) of the right answers are achieved as revealed in Table (2) and shown in Figure (2), a disaster that requires an urgent solution by the students themselves as well as the college instructors, Al Jubbory (2014) asserts. In this regard, It has been perceived that the semantic terms *pleonasm* and *oxymoron* constitute a serious challenge for Iraqi EFL undergraduate students and this is empirically represented in the very weak percentage of the right answers (23% for each), a detrimental achievement subjected to bitter criticism by the specialists, educationalists, scholars and analysts. In fact, the two semantic labels of *oxymoron* and *pleonasm* are not found in the learners' mental dictionaries, as Rajimwale (2004) asserts. As one moves to the third semantic label of *motif*, the learners' performance is growing worse because only 26 students (out

of 200 ones) come up with the correct responses. The low percentage (13%) of the correct responses is an indicative reference of the learners' incompetence to express the correct label referring to frequent occurrence of an action (i.e. *motif*). On the other hand, few answers reported here state "*paradox*" instead of *oxymoron* and the researcher decides them correct simply because such a response is also a poetic label equivalent to *oxymoron* in essence.

Concerning the technically used terms in pragmatics, the learners' achievement is completely failure, which is represented by the very small number (12.25%) of the right answers recorded by the students in question as shown in Table (2) and illustrated in Figure (2). The pragmatic-based term *hyperbole*, which stands at just (6%) of the right answers, represents deficiency in the pragmatic section of the students' linguistic competence. Alternatively, a creative ability is embodied with the pragmatic-related label "*overstatement*", an equivalent label accepted as a pragmatically-based alternative, affirms Leech (1983). In the same vein, *irony* registers only 24 correct responses (12%) in their performance, a number that proposes limitation in this paradigm. The disappointment also expands to the pragmatic-based terms *metaphor* (17%) and *pun* (14%). Such a detective accomplishment represents the sizeable impediment the learners at hand have long suffered from in expressing and producing pragmatically-dependent terms naming the poetic concepts that evoke the reader's attention and jolt his emotions and feelings in this tendency as Rajimwale (2004) often affirms.

CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing Iraqi EFL students' abilities to perceive and produce poetic labels, this research arrives at the following conclusions:

1. Iraqi EFL students' ability at perception level is much better than that of production level concerning poetic labels.
2. The problematic achievement in the poetic labels by these students is basically demonstrated in linguistic labels that are employed in pragmatics. Consequently, there is a serious need to handle this deficiency.
3. Of the terms that fall within the scope of pragmatics, *metaphor* witnesses a better ability in both perception and production phases by the students at hand than the rest of the terms of the same linguistic field.
4. The linguistic term *hyperbole*, as a pragmatic term employed in poetry, witnesses much more deteriorated performance by those students than all other labels. Such deficiency is attributed to the learners' incompetence of pragmatic labels during their four-year scientific study of English.
5. Semantically-dependent labels reveal deficiency by EFL learners in perception and production of poetic labels, but these failed responses are not as great as those in pragmatically-based labels.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire / Test

Q. 1 / Choose the most appropriate option in each of the following items.

1. William Wordsworth, in his poem 'Lucy', describes the girl he deeply adores by saying:

**"A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eyes"**

Here, the poet employs the device to describe the girl's beauty.

A. Simile B. pun C. oxymoron D. **metaphor**

2. John Milton, in Samson Agonists, employs the expression:

"To live a life-dead, a living death"

Here, the italicized expression is poetically defined as

A. Metaphor B. pun C. **oxymoron** D. hyperbole

3. In the poem "As I Walked Out One Evening" by W.H. Auden, the poet expressing his ever-lasting love to the girl he deeply adores by saying:

**"I'll love you dear, I'll love you
Till China and Africa meet"**

This description is known as

A. **hyperbole** B. metaphor C. metonymy D. Personification

4. Denise Rogers says in his poem entitled "Take a Poem to Lunch" :

**"I'd love to take a poem to lunch
Or treat it to a wholesome brunch"**

The poem draws upon to create humorous influence in the reader.

A. hyperbole B. **personification** C. metonymy D. pun

5. In Julius Caesar, Shakespeare says:

"**Friends, Romans and countrymen, lend me your ears**". Here, the use of 'ears' represents.....

- A. meronony B. hyperbole C. metaphor D. Oxymoron

6. T.S. Eliot defines death by the following lines

"**I am not prophet – and
here's no great matter**"

In this excerpt, Eliot employs to represent an inevitable morality of human beings.

- A. hyperbole B. litotes C. metaphor D. simile

7. Shakespeare said "**A young man married is a man that is married**". In this respect, is employed.

- A. metaphor B. oxymoron C. pun D. hyperbole

Q. 2/ Fill in each of the following spaces with the suitable term that is employed in English poetry.

1. is a figure of speech in which the poet defines something or a phenomenon which is completely opposed to the state of affairs as in Coleridge saying

"**Water, water everywhere
And not a drop to drink**" (*Irony*)

2. is a trope in which an entity or action is defined in an exaggerative manner; that is to say the object's description is greater than what is indicated by the state of affair as in '**You made my blood burn**'. (*Hyperbole*)

3. is a poetic device pragmatically approached where an object is compared to another entity which is not related. The comparison is seen as an indirect one as in '**reading is food**'. (*Metaphor*)

4. is a literary device depending on the homophonous, polysemous or homonymous character of words to present labels that have the same form but different meaning as in "**Her cat is near the computer to keep an eye on the mouse**". (*Pun*)

5. is a technique employed by poets, writers and speakers to the use of more words or phrases than is needed as in "**Kick the ball with your feet**" and '**The doctor who looks after the patient**'. (*Pleonasm*)

6. is a figure of speech mostly employed in poetry where two contradictory labels are juxtaposed to arouse some kind of humour on the behalf of the reader or audience as in '**bitter good**' and '**awfully good**'. (*Oxymoron*)

7. is the recurrence of an image, event or action supporting a theme adopted by a poet, author or writer when composing a poem. (*motif*)