

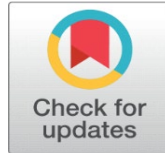
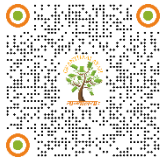
ASPECTS OF LINGUISTIC USAGE IN ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD BY THOMAS GRAY

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ABSTRACT

Poetic language includes three key components: sound, shape, and sense. However, every poem has its own context and is an intertext with other poems. Therefore, the substantial use of alliteration, rhyming, lyrical expression, and clichés, as well as other language devices that bring attention to words, sounds, or other device decorations, is a necessary tool and trick in the scientific production of poetry. This article explored to inspect the aspects of linguistic usage in the forms of semantics that are accomplished in the poetic and figurative language of Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, which aimed to examine the influence of lexical knowledge in language and literature and how it enhances inventiveness. Even though this poem speaks of ordinary people, and an expression of sympathy and support for those who have the misfortune to be without money or social prestige in the literary sense. The involvement of syntactic-semantic factors, viz., presupposition and entailment, make the poem more vivid to the reader. Furthermore, the poem *Elegy* contains hyponyms and synonyms, accompanied by a semantic echo. This study focuses on lexical relations included in the poem through syntagmatic and paradigmatic word descriptions. Further, this study examines those ambiguous words that generate complexity between the speaker/writer and their listener/reader. It has been discovered that various aspects of semantics form a nexus between the theme and word formation in poetry.

Keywords: Semantic Field, Hyponyms, Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic Relations, Ambiguity

1. INTRODUCTION

Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1751) was composed in the late classical period, midway between the ages of Pope and that of Wordsworth. Generally, it is accepted that this *Elegy* is a lamenting song on the sudden sad death of his close friend Richard West. But, instead, this poem is a meditation on death and remembrance after the death of the ordinary people in

villages and rural areas who lived and died quietly and never had the chance to show their greatness, pondering their rural lives as they lie buried in the churchyard. The poem begins with a contemplation of the close of day (curfew), then proceeds to eulogize the latent virtues of the dead, and then concludes with an exhortation about the necessity for commemorating the dead, with a practical demonstration of this in the final three-stanza epitaph, which has the poet himself as the subject [Ufot \(2013\)](#).

When Thomas Gray wrote this poem, the globe was undergoing a period of cognitive advancement known as the Age of Enlightenment by philosophers. The Enlightenment was a philosophical concept that sprang from scientific breakthroughs in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Simultaneously, in the field of philosophy, the idea of rationalism's strength was gaining traction. The poem uses the Latin phrase "memento mori" to inspire the classical concept of "memento mori", which speaks clearly to all humans, "Remember that you must die." While, Gray did not write many poems, but his poem "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" has given him a well-deserved position in literary history. This poem, Elegy, contains elements from both the literary periods of the Augustan Age and the start of the Romantic Era.

2. THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF LINGUISTIC USAGE IN THE ELEGY

Essential elements of linguistics in the Elegy include three key components: sound, shape, and sense. However, this poem has its own context and is an intertext for the main text. Linguistic devices in the poem that bring attention to words, sounds, or other diction-decorations instead of ideas are inappropriate (heavy uses of alliteration, rhyming, poetic expression, and clichés) in the scientific poetry production of the Elegy. Three other sound play elements of poetry are rhyme scheme, meter (i.e., regular rhythm), and word sounds (i.e., alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, and rhythm), creating the poetry's performative and spoken nature (figurative/connotative language with the uses of metaphor, simile, and personification) about Thomas Gray's attitude and linguistic deviation toward the subject or audience in the figurative language. The poetic language in the Elegy is the tool of sound or meaning that a poet can use to make the poem more surprising, vivid, complex, or interesting. There are three structures to the poem: (i) stanza: a group of lines in a poem similar to a paragraph; (ii) quatrain: a stanza with four lines; and (iii) couplet: a stanza with two lines. The internal structure of this Elegy included tone, speaker, situation, setting, theme, diction, imagery, sound, and symbols. The external forms look at rhyme and stanzas, the poem's formal qualities. The phonological features of the Elegy are phonaesthetic structural aspects and an analysis of prosodic forms of iambic pentameter in the 32 quatrains of the poem. Phonology performed the organization and patterning of sounds in particular languages in the texture of the Elegy. Whereas phonetics had the technical procedure to the articulatory, transmitted (acoustic), and perceived (auditory) phonetics, which how these sounds function in a particular way to the phonemic inventory to be syllable structure or phonotactics and the prosody of the language, that is, how features of pitch, loudness, and length work to produce accent, rhythm, intonation, and speech sounds in the Elegy.

However, in the linguistics aspects, a semantic skill of the reader refers to an ability to understand the words (lexicon) or vocabulary they possess and their ability to use them appropriately. In contrast, grammar is the study of the structures and rules of language, which are most often used for language learning among non-linguists. The relationship between grammar and linguistics, grammar is simply the

collection of principles defining how to put together a sentence. One sometimes hears people say that such-and-such a language has no grammar, but that is not true of any language. Every language has restrictions on how words must be arranged to construct a sentence. In the theoretical aspects, firstly, all syntax rules are grammar rules, but not all are syntax rules.

Consequently, grammar refers to language structure, that is, how words are used in speech and how groups of words are put together in patterns in this poem. In the Elegy, semantics is how the lexicon, grammatical structure, tone, and other sentence elements coalesce to communicate its meaning. Semantics refers to the literal meaning of the words that the poet used. Therefore, the concepts of grammar and semantics are connected to the uses for the different aspects of lexicogrammatical functions about structural and lexical (denotation) meanings. However, the textual formation of Elegy is composed of semantic relations of lexicogrammatical importance.

Therefore, the lexicogrammatical approach in Elegy is a level of linguistic structure where lexis, or vocabulary, and grammar, or syntax, combine into one. At this level, words and grammatical structures are not seen as independent but rather mutually dependent, with one level interacting with the other. Secondly, semantics in Elegy is the study of the meaning of words and sentences that uses the relations of linguistic forms to non-linguistic concepts and mental representations to explain how native speakers understand sentences. Here, semantic theories and principles by Alfred Tarski, Noam Chomsky, and Alfred Habdank Skarbek Korzybski are mainly three, (i) the referential theory to meaning, (ii) the non-referential theory to meaning, and (iii) the generative grammarian theory to meaning, which present a semantic feature analysis that improves readers' comprehension by helping them understand the meaning of the text by reading actively and with the purpose for learning, understanding, or enjoyment, vocabulary, and content retention in the Elegy. Therefore, linguistic aspects in this poem are:

- 1) Phonetics, which presented different sounds with the conceptual stresses and accents of the particular words
- 2) Phonology mentioned the sounds of specific language phrases and idioms
- 3) Morphology performed the formation of words in the art and craft way
- 4) Syntax is used and presented in the shape of sentences skillfully
- 5) Semantics had literal meanings exactly
- 6) The pragmatics figured out the language used in context appropriately

All these linguistic aspects and tools are employed to analyze the phonetics, syntax, and semantics of Elegy's figurative structure and schematic texture. Therefore, the techniques of linguistic theory are used to analyze the literary text of Elegy. Statistical methods in the linguistic analysis are to understand or find the most probable meaning, grapheme, or sequence of a sound (phoneme) in a word, syntactic contents, and figurative aspects to express functions of the different exponents in the text of the Elegy which even develop a learner's language competency, i.e., vocabulary, grammar, functions, reading, listening, speaking, and writing. However, the metrical phonological theories of Stallworthy, Wales, Katamba, Leech, Roach, and Boulton evaluated the phonological exploration and the suprasegmental features of poetry such as syllabification, metre, rhyme, elision, onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance and consonance, and exemplifies how these devices support the meaning of this poem, Elegy in which words were chosen for their sound and suggestive power for their sense, and involved metre, rhyme and figures of speech relating the verse and phonological sequence to the appraisal of

musical notes or sound devices (onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, metre, rhyme, and elision of sounds) in the cohesive patterns to the peculiarity and originality of poetic language.

Therefore, this article also explored a scientific literary discourse and discussion of all the phonaesthetic devices, which identified the Elegy as simple and comfortable to comprehend by the readers. When Gray was composing this poem, the globe was experiencing a period of cognitive growth that the era's philosophers dubbed the "Age of Enlightenment." The Enlightenment was a thoughtful movement that progressed from the noteworthy proceedings invented by scientists in the seventeenth and eighteenth hundredths. Gray was called a transition poet because he belonged to the era when the Augustine or Neo-Classical Age ended, and the Romantic Era was about to start the medieval English grammar in use.

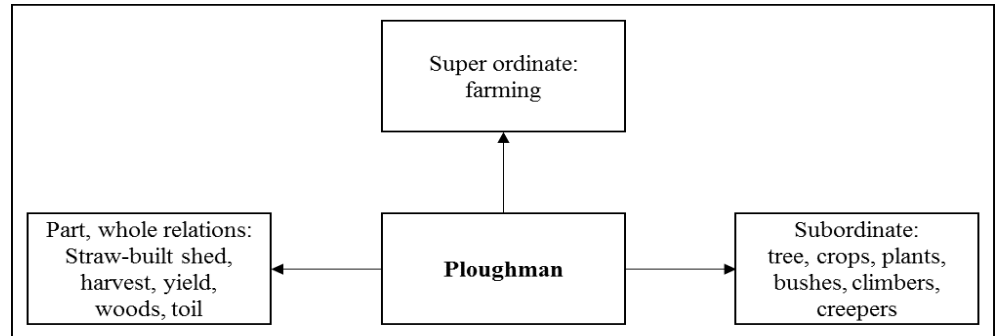
3. SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF THE ELEGY

Furthermore, the foremost objective of this paper is to carry out a semantic analysis. Concerning the objective, the fundamental questions are: what are the particular elements of semantic analysis? How does semantic analysis assist in understanding poetry? This research paper accomplished employment of various semantic aspects in the poem, Elegy. The semantic notions in this poem examine Gray's sentiments towards ordinary or poor people.

Further semantic analysis is carried out based on different aspects of meanings. The diagrammatic representation assures the significance of this paper. Semantics is the basic level of linguistics, including studying word and sentence meanings in a language. Lexical relations or sense relations characterize the meaning of words based on various types, via, synonymy, antonym, polysemy, metonymy, hyponymy, homonymy, etc. Meanings are also denotative, connotative, collocated, thematic, etc. The semantic structure of vocabulary in a language can also be described based on paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. The speaker's motive can also be comprehended through presupposition, entailment, and implicature. This research has been conducted as semantics plays a crucial role in understanding the essence of poetry for the same purpose.

The poem's opening line establishes a solemn tone: "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day." The curfew bell does not simply ring; it "knells," a term used to describe bells rung during death or burial. The word "knell" is also associated with death and is considered connotative. The line, "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day/and leaves the world to darkness and me," is a synonym for "parting day." The process in which the meaning of one word is included in the meaning of another is termed hyponymy. This association between these two terms is described as a hyponym. For instance, "daffodil = flower, dog = animal, carrot = vegetable, banyan = tree." From the poem lines, the words "ploughman, tree, straw-built shed, harvest, yield, woods, toil" all lie in the same semantic field of "farming." All these words include certain specific relationships with one another. Therefore, these words are called co-hyponyms. Hyponymy comes under paradigmatic relations.

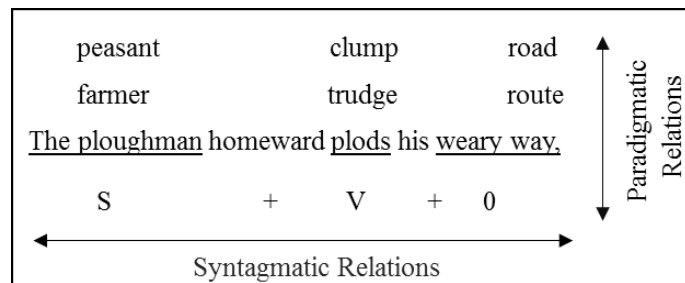
The Ploughman homeward plods his weary way (line 3, stanza first).



Paradigmatic semantic relations of the word Ploughman

The word "ploughman" acts as a hyponym under the superordinate "farming," whereas "trees, crops, plants, bushes, climbers, creepers" are co-hyponyms of "ploughman." "Straw-built shed, harvest, yield, woods, toil" are all meronyms or constituent parts of the word "farming" (whole).

the Ploughman homeward plods his weary way,



The sequential relationship between the words "ploughman" (s), "plods" (v), and "weary way" (o) exhibits the syntagmatic relations. On the other hand, the words "ploughman, plods" and "way" can be replaced by "peasant, farmer, clump, trudge, road" and "route," respectively. Substitution of words belonging to the same class is termed paradigmatic.

In line first of the second stanza, "now fades the glimmering landscape on sight," the poet states that the "glimmering fields" are gradually fading due to the occurrence of dusk. The words "fade" and "glimmering" are gradable antonyms that indicate the use of paradox in this line. The speaker is not melancholy, yet pensive, as he recounts the tranquil environment that accompanies him in the second stanza, which continues the somber tone of the first. The atmosphere, too, is described as possessing a "solemn quiet."

In verse phrase, "Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower," is the tower that is usually built in the churchyard. In this poem line, the poet employs metaphor to narrate the tower in which the owl resides. Both words are related to "ivy- mantled" (coated with ivy). "Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade," the speaker describes the rough, shady yew-tree in this line. Both the words "yew" and "tree" are bound together to form a new compound word, "yew-tree" (a coniferous tree with fresh berry-like fruit), and the words are long and drawn in long-drawn (continued for an extended period) are associated with each other. Therefore, they come under collocate meanings. Metonymy is a lexical relation that relies on a whole part relation in everyday experience; it is also called extended metaphor.

"And drowsy tinkling lull the distant folds." The word "tinkling" is related to "bell." "The moping owl does to the moon complain," "grief" is replaced by "owl's call" (moping owl). The use of verb does in the poem line indicates that syntactically

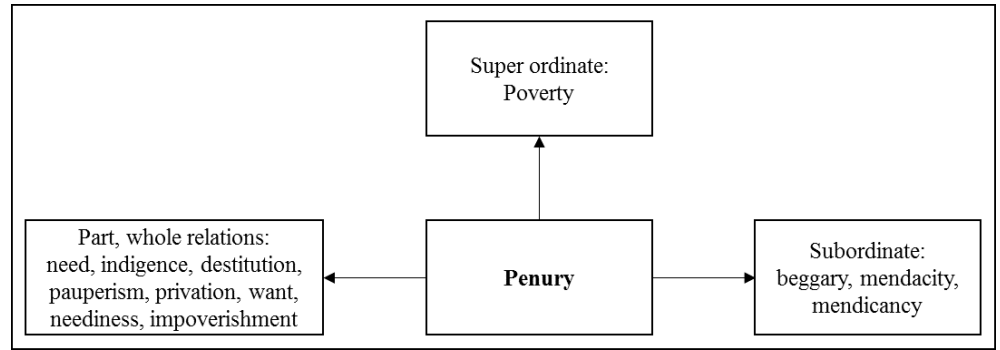
the sentence is incorrect. In the fourth stanza, the speaker focuses our attention on the rustic churchyard's tombs. Two possibly opposing pictures of death are conveyed to us. "Where heaves the turf in many a moldering heap," line 14 depicts the heaps of earth that encircle the tombs; the soil must be disturbed to excavate a burial. This line's syntax is a little perplexing. Gray has switched the grammatical structure around. This line should read, "Where the turf heaves, not where the turf heaves." Gray has switched the grammatical structure around. The syntax emulates how the earth has been disturbed, just as the earth has been interrupted. However, through the same token, "the rude forefathers" buried underneath the earth seem ultimately at tranquility; it is stated that they are laid in "cells," a word that reminds us of the silence of a monastery, and that they "sleep."

Nevertheless, if the "Forefathers" are sleeping, the speaker reminds us that they will never again emerge from their "beds" to enjoy the pleasant sounds of rural life that the living enjoy. The information already known to the speaker is known as presupposition, "No more shall rouse them from their lowly beds." The word "lowly beds" refers not only to the simple cemeteries in which the forefathers are buried but also to the modest living standards in which they lived. Here the speaker assumes the living standard of the buried people. "Or busy housewife polisher evening care: no children run to lisp their sire's return." The speaker then discusses several comforts that the dead will no longer have: a house, a wife, and children's bliss. The word "housewife" (which means "house + wife") possesses a different meaning than its component particles. This type of lexical association comes under the sense relations of collocative meaning in English. "Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield," the deceased will be unable to partake in the delights of work, such as plowing the fields every day. In the poem lines, "the ploughman homeward plods his weary way" (stanza first) and "Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield" (stanza seventh), the words "ploughman" and "yields" lie in the same semantic field of farming, which indicates that there is a semantic echo in stanza seven.

The speaker also tells the reader not to look down on the impoverished since their tombs are small and basic. Furthermore, he says that the ornate tributes surrounding the graves of the "Proud" are extravagant. *Ambiguity* is a notion or concept that can be comprehended in several ways. On line 39, "where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault" (stanza tenth), the term "fretted" has a twofold meaning in this context: on the one hand, it might relate to the decoration on a cathedral ceiling; on the other hand, it can indicate that the costly tributes of the privileged are "fretful," or annoying. Consequently, the term "fretted" is ambiguous. "Chill Penury repressed their noble rage" (stanza-13, line-51).

On the other hand, the impoverished were never able to reach their full legislative and creative ability because they were poorly educated and never obtained the "Knowledge" that would have allowed them to govern and create. Poverty, on the other hand, "froze the genial current of their soul." Poverty, in other words, crippled their ability to tap into their deepest desires—the same desires that may have motivated them to become great poets or politicians. "Penury" (noun): a state of extreme poverty or destitution. The nouns "beggary, mendicity" and "mendicancy" are hyponyms of "penury." "Beggary" = a state of extreme poverty, "mendacity" = the condition or activities of a beggar, and "mendicancy" = the condition of being a beggar, the practice of begging.

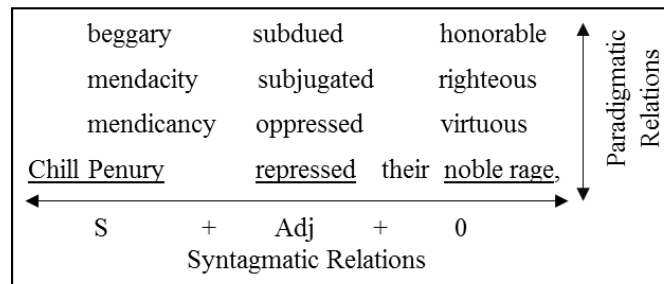
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage.



Paradigmatic semantic relations of the word penury

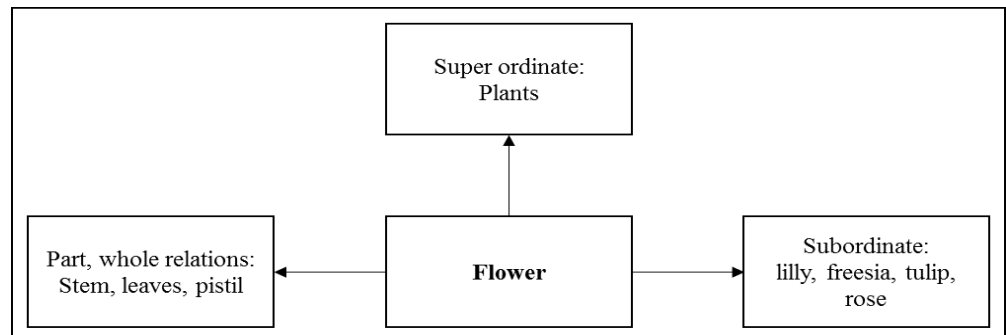
"Poverty" is the hypernym or superordinate, and "penury, beggary, mendacity, and mendicancy" are co-hyponyms or sub-ordinates of each other and hyponyms of "penury." Need, indigence, destitution, pauperism, privation, want, neediness, and impoverishment are meronyms of "poverty."

Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,



The sequential arrangement of a subject, adjective, and object in the above poem line signifies syntagmatic relations. While the poetic words "penury, repressed" and "noble" can be replaced by beggary, mendacity, mendicancy, subdued, subjugated, oppressed, honorable, righteous, and virtuous.

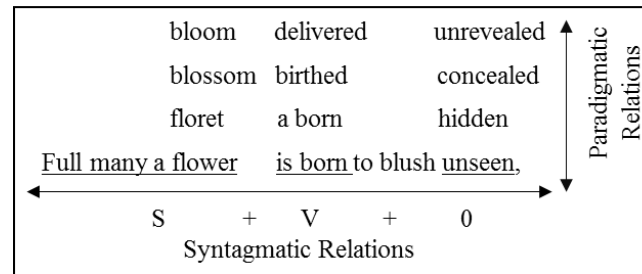
An analogy is a process by which new words and inflections are created based on regularities in the form of existing ones. For example, in stanza fourteenth, "Full many a gem of purest ray serene/The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear: Full many a flower is born to blush unseen and waste its sweetness on the desert air." Gray compares the poor's capabilities to a "diamond" lost in the ocean or a "flower" growing in the desert, using a sequence of comparisons. The words "flower" (noun) and "sweetness" (adjective) signify syntagmatic sense relations (flower: sweetness).



Paradigmatic semantic relations of the word flower

The plant is the superordinate hypernym, and the flower is a sub-hypernym. Therefore, Lily, Freesia, Tulip, and Rose are hyponyms or sub-ordinates. Furthermore, stems, leaves, and pistils are classified into part-whole relations.

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,



In the line mentioned above, the sequential relationship between "full of a flower" (s), born (v), and "to blush unseen" (o) is syntagmatic. On the other hand, flowers, born and unseen, can be switched with florets, blossoms, blooms, born, delivered, birthed, unrevealed, concealed, and hidden sequentially.

Gray believes that, just as an unnoticed flower in the desert is a "waste," the poor and uninformed middle-class skills are "wastes" since they go untapped and undeveloped. The speaker then compares these poor, ignorant people to three of the preceding century's greatest influential and successful figures: John Hampden, a key figure in the legislature's fight against Charles I. John Milton was the renowned poet who composed "Paradise Lost" and hostile Charles I. The speaker speculates that someone lying in this churchyard, like Hampden, Milton, or Cromwell, had the intrinsic potential to resist injustice but never had the chance to do so.

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife," The speaker further commended ordinary people's modest lives. They live "far from the madding crowd" of urban existence and politics. "Madding" can refer to one of two things: "maddening" (i.e., the cause of lunacy or instability) or "crazy" (i.e., the mob is itself bitterly insane). In any scenario, ordinary individuals were kept out of this mad realm, and consequently, they hardly "strayed" from the patent's immoral activities. Instead, they continued to live humble yet productive lives—consequently, the word "maddening" has semantic ambiguity.

"Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered muse/The place of fame and elegy supply: And many a holy text around she strews," The bodies buried here possess simple gravestones with only their names and nativity and death dates, rather than "fame and elegy." These ordinary folks were not well-known, and no ornate elegies or memorial verses have been composed for them. Nonetheless, the simplicity of their gravestones attests to the dignity and "holiness" of their plain living. The simplicity of the gravestones presupposes or entails the simple livelihood of those individuals. Therefore, it can be said that the poet has employed the technique of entailment in this poem line. "That teaches the rustic moralist to die." The word "rustic moralist" can be interpreted in various ways. It could allude to somebody contemplating the denotation of death in the rural areas. However, it's probably referring to the speaker, who is teaching or pondering on the essence of both birth and mortality. This preceding interpretation indicates the use of metonymy.

According to the speaker, many individuals remain alive when faced with the prospect of death and being ignored. Gray has employed paradox in this poem line: "this pleasing anxious being." However, "being" or "living" can be "anxious" or "full

of anxiety." Besides, when confronted with death, simply being alive is "pleasant" or pleasurable. Here, the speaker mentions life and death, which are considered gradable antonyms.

However, after this poem, the poet intends to be recognized by the regular folks. He has been lauded by those with whom he will probably be buried, rather than the eminent and renowned. Here, the speaker employs the presupposition technique as he presumes his burial like ordinary folks. This poetry portrays the reality of birth and death. Gray's word choice and word-formation techniques indicate his intimate relationship with ordinary folks. The poem depicts the classical notion of "memento mori," a Latin phrase that directly addresses all human beings: "remember that you must die." The speaker believes that mortality does not make any difference between high-class and low-class individuals. Although Gray did not compose plenty of poetry, *Elegy* has given him a privileged position in literary history. The use of the word "knell" in the poem line "the Curfew tolls the knell of the parting day the curfew" described the death or burial scene; therefore, it can be considered under the class of connotative meaning. The words "parting day" and "darkness" are synonyms. The words "ploughman" in the verse line "the ploughman homeward plods his weary way" "Penury" in line Chill Penury repressed their noble rage, "flower" inline "full many a flower is born to blush unseen", exhibited the extensive use of hyponymy and paradigmatic relations in the poem. The line, "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife", is highly ambiguous, as "maddening" refers to either (the cause of lunacy or instability) or "crazy." The simplicity of the tombstones of poor people has strongly proved the use of presupposition and entailment in the poem.

4. CONCLUSION

The principal objective of this paper is to understand Gray's poem, "Elegy Written in A Country Churchyard," from linguistic aspects as a semantic point of view. Phonaesthesia analyzed the expressiveness of sounds, especially those sounds which are felt to echo their meanings in the poem as well as linguistic aspects explored the tools and techniques of phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantic, syntax structure, and pragmatic usage appropriately in the poem. For the figurative aspects analysis evaluated the phonological exploration and the suprasegmental features of poetry such as syllabification, metre, rhyme, elision, onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, and consonance, and exemplifies how these devices support the meaning of this poem. After performing a semantic analysis of the poem, this article evokes the consequence of the analysis. In connection with critical discourse analysis, at the textual level, the general theme is the death and fate of the people on the periphery of society [Hidayati et al. \(2018\)](#). The storyline starts with the causes and consequences of poverty, and there are syntactic and lexical elements at the microstructure level. The level of social cognition describes the close relationship between the poet and the elegy, and social conditions picture the historical background of the text's production. The preceding description and analysis of the poem have proved that *Elegy* is packed with semantic features. Moreover, the article is a good guide for researchers who want to work on semantic concepts in the future. The reviewers of this article can effortlessly analyze the semantics of any poem.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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