



Relexicalization And Overlexicalization In Golding's Lord Of The Flies

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Abstract:

Words refer to objects, actions, events, ideas, qualities in the world of experience outside of language. The meaningful patterns of relexicalization and overlexicalization reveal and present the theme and atmosphere of the novel more or less in an explicit manner. Relexicalization' is a kind of re-shaping of the meanings of the existing words to convey different meanings in the context.

One comes across a number of words, phrases and sentences which carry a derivation in meaning. William Golding's Lord of the Flies also contains a few patterns of synonymous and near synonymous words which can be termed as overlexicalization.

In the opinion of Bloomfield, a word is 'a minimum free form'. It is the smallest linguistic form which occurs in isolation. In other words, it is a single unit of language that can be represented in writing or speech. Words refer to objects, actions, events, ideas, qualities in the world of experience outside of language. Words might be studied as normal words, neologisms, relexicalizations, overlexicalizations and dated words.

Relexicalization' is a kind of re-shaping of the meanings of the existing words to convey different meanings in the context. Fowler defines it as follows:

'Relexicalizations involve re-orientation of the meanings of the existing words; pointed ostentatious inversions of meaning'.

One comes across a number of words, phrases and sentences which carry a derivation in meaning. Such expressions are known as re-lexicalization which Golding uses them for his convenience successfully in Lord of the Flies. Some examples are cited here.

The word 'fledges' is used as an image of 'fringed forest' and hence does not carry its original meaning 'feathered'; 'flinked' conveys the idea of spray; 'a black bat-like creature' is not confined to its shape but conveys the evil in the children; 'contours' is associated with human face.

'The ground beneath them was a bank covered with coarse grass, torn everywhere by the upheavals of fallen trees, scattered with decaying coconuts and palm saplings' - here upheavals is no more

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volcanic.

'A blur of sunlight was crawling across his hair' -the animal movement of crawling is associated with sunlight here.

Golding uses the word 'larger' in stead of bigger to indicate the size of boys and he even does not hesitate to count them as creatures.

The writer uses child's vocabulary. For example, 'mountain' is used for hill and 'spear' for stick. The mountain, often described in the novel, is actually a hill which has been climbed with comparatively little difficulty by the 'bigun' and 'littluns' as well. The 'spear' is the sick, used as a lethal weapon by the children in hunting. The 'tribe' and 'savages' refer to the English children who are supposed to be representatives of their discipline and culture. Golding never hesitates to use such derogatory words for the children who regress in the course of time in the island, but for a temporary period till their rescue. Words like 'expedition', 'explorer', 'mutinously' and the like heighten the meaning.

The word 'fun' loses its gaiety and becomes very serious. The boar-hunting, the tribal dance and sadism are 'fun' for Jack and his group.

'Jack had meant to leave him in doubt, as an assertion of power, but Piggy by advertising his omission made more cruelty necessary' -here 'advertising' is used not in the normal sense of publicity, but it simply expresses the mind of the innocent Piggy for food.

'Here struck down by the heat, the sow fell and the hunters hurled themselves at her. This dreadful eruption from an unknown world made her frantic; she squealed and bucked and the air was full of sweat and noise and blood and terror'- the word 'eruption' here certainly is not used in its normal usage, but adds to the strength and power of the language and theme in the context.

Phrases such as 'bath of heat', 'colours of corruption', 'smashing time', 'uncorrupted silence', 'martyred expression', 'gigantic whip' and the like, show Golding's power of use of vocabulary in extraordinary cases.

'Do our dance! Come on ! Dance!' - the remark of Jack conveys a negative meaning. Here dance has lost its beauty and sanctity. It is a wild dance to release the energies of the so called savages and thereby resulting in the murder of Simon.

'Then there was that indefinable connection between himself and Jack'-here '-indefinable' stands for the mutual attraction of enemies.

Fowler explains 'overlexicalization' that involves the presence of : “a large number of synonymous or nearsynonymous terms for communication of some specialized area of experience”. William Golding's Lord of the Files contains a few patterns of synonymous and near synonymous words which can be termed as overlexicalization.

The island gradually loses its colour with the progress of the plot and ugliness settles in its place. The words of Ralph are no more effective and Jack ultimately reigns over the island. Thus it is like evil winning over truth, of course for a temporary period till the rescue. The theme of disappointment and grief found in the children can be known from the following pattern of words :

Pale, apprehension, frustrated, mortification, pallor, humiliation, hurt, restlessness, discomfort, mad, shaky, hopeless, uneasy, lamentation, shrilly, sad, exasperate, rue, whine, scream, pain, oh! God! etc.

Similarly a number of words also form a pattern which expresses the atmosphere of fear and torture. The young children are suffering from home-sickness. But as they have no way of escape, they have to make up their mind to adjust themselves to the new condition provided to them. They are afraid of the atmosphere prevailing in the island. In the process Percival, the little one, loses his identity and forgets his address at the end. The words of the following category present the atmosphere :

Skull, monster, phantom, grating, giant, awful, howling, screaming, growl, agonised, frightened, fierce, terrors, shudder, vicious, malevolently, moan, nightmares, perilous, intimidation, ghots, appal, menace, Leviathan, tremors, catastrophe, demented, squeal, trembling, gasping, sweating, shiver, torment, demonic, dreadful, monstrous, fatal, hangman, ululation, excruciatingly etc.

The treatment of decay and ugliness is equally prominent in the following pattern of words :

Pallidly, dreary, dark damp, decay, wild, bleaky, hell, pall, chill, smother, dread, foully, stinking, abominable, scab, dead, filthy, charred, lifeless, befouled bodies etc.

The atmosphere of suspicion and unfriendly attitude is lightly touched. The pattern is as follows :

Blurt, unfriendly, furtive, dubious, inscrutable, snivel, resentful, derisive, mysteriously, inimical, incomprehensible etc.

The rivalry leads to the end of innocence in the island, with the murder of Simon, the Christ figure and Piggy, the good soul.



The following pattern of words exhibits the theme of rivalry and end of natural innocence :

Grudgingly, squint, indignation, recrimination, antagonism, embroil, grimace, contemptuously etc.

Words like war paint, hunters, hunting, sheathknife, wooden spears, circling, signalled, clouted, stroke, stabbing, prodding, scream, shriek, squealling, lugging, prowling etc. associated with hunting in the island project the terrible brutality in the novel.

Hunters' enjoyment of the chanting "Kill the Pig! Cut her throat ! Spill her blood!" epitomizes the terrible rivalry and brutality in the adult world.

The atmosphere of cruelty, intolerance and brutality is further evident from the following pattern of words:

Attack, shattered, assault, smashed, destruction, shudder, paralyse, pig-dying noise, hack etc.

Words associated with weapons and modern warfare run parallel in the novel. Most of them are referential words and are related to the theme of the novel.

The pattern is as follows :

Army, pilot, cabin, fighter plane with wings, machine-gun, Commander in Navy, air-port, atom bomb, cannon, boomed, short blast, plane, bomb, tank, jet, submarine, ship, battle, explosion, parachute, bang, helmeted-hed, white drill epaulettes, revolver, whistle, sub-machine gun, naval officer, cutter etc.

As a contrast to the natural setting of the island, the following pattern of words expresses the urban life as recollected by the children :

Black shoes, elastic garter, shirt, jacket, jersey, badges, stockings, clothing, square black cap, silver badge, black cloaks, megaphone, trumpet- thing, railway line, Rugby ball, school, clock, policeman, law, houses, streets, T.V. set, steam engine, stone wall, garden, glasses, copper kettle, plate, bowl of cornflakes, sugar, cream, book-shelf, chess-player, radio, boat, air-field, bus-centre, car, trains, lamps, wheels, pillar-box, postman, uniform, sheets of cellophane, Wilshire, Catham, Devon, Dartmoor etc.

The life in the island is quite peaceful, happy and normal at the outset till the Devil in Jack overpowers. Of course, as per the Law of Nature, greater force is applied to counteract lesser force. The Naval Officer, a representative of military power arrives at last to restore normalcy in the island. The following pattern of words expresses the atmosphere of peace, happiness and way of life in the island :

fair, delight, ambition, giggle, good, reason, intelligence, attractive appearance, applause, triumph, rational assurance, amusement, cheerfulness, admiration, generosity, gay, rosily, good humoured, friendly, dancing, exult, silvery, pax etc.

It is interesting to mark an exciting pattern of words used in the novel. It affirms that Golding is not a pessimist. The pattern shows the varieties of colour as selected by Golding to paint nature in Lord of the Flies. They are the following :

Violet, brown, red, yellow, dark blue, shadowy green, purple, green, dard green, grey, deep cream, fading pink, grey blue-black, bulberry-coloured, mousecoloured, silver, golden, light blue, waxen green, olive green, china-blue, rose, crimson, white, cream, copper-coloured, iridescent green, black, blue, near white, blue-white, chocolate- coloured, chestnut, sandy, honey-coloured.

Lord of the Flies is remarkable for the varieties of overlexicalizations. The meaningful patterns reveal and present the theme and atmosphere of the novel more or less in an explicit manner.

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