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Syntagmatic-Paradigmatic Relations in Charles Dickens` *Hard Times*

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Abstract

This research will be examined De Saussure`s syntagmatic-paradigmatic relations On Charles Dickens` *Hard Times*. Dickens in this novel uses a character and episodes that stand in paradigmatic relation to him and his surrounded society. A character turns to be a carrier of his views and philosophy and conveys many autobiographical events from his actual life. Besides, he depicts personal attitudes to be presented as events in the novel. Thus, the novel shows a literary substitution of a character as well as events with Dickens` real life. This seems a fertile arena to study a paradigmatic relation. At the same time, linear relation can be applied between characters and actions to have a horizontal reflection besides the vertical one.

Key words: Dickens, *Hard Times* and syntagmatic - paradigmatic relation, Stephen Blackpool, utilitarianism.

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العلاقات التركيبية النموذجية في رواية الأوقات الصعبة لتشارلز ديكنز

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وزارة التربية

المخلص: يطبق هذا البحث علاقات دي سوسير التركيبية النموذجية في رواية الأوقات الصعبة لتشارلز ديكنز. يستخدم ديكنز في هذه الرواية شخصية وحلقات تقف في علاقة نموذجية به وبمجتمعه المحيط. تتحول الشخصية إلى حاملة لآرائها وفلسفتها وتشتهر بالعديد من أحداث سيرته الذاتية من حياته الفعلية. إلى جانب ذلك، فهو يصور المواقف الشخصية التي سيتم تقديمها كأحداث في الرواية ذاتها. وهكذا، فإن الرواية تظهر الاستبدال الأدبي للشخصية وكذلك الأحداث مع الحياة الواقعية لديكنز. تبدو هذه ساحة خصبة لدراسة العلاقة النموذجية. في الوقت نفسه، يمكن تطبيق العلاقة الخطية بين الأحرف والأفعال للحصول على انعكاس أفقي إلى جانب الانعكاس العمودي.

الكلمات الدالة: ديكنز، الأوقات الصعبة والعلاقة التركيبية النموذجية. ستيفن بلاك بول، النظام النفعي.

1- Introduction

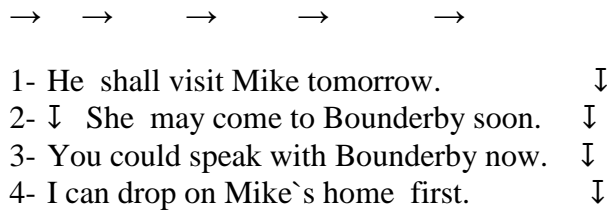
The structural analysis that is adopted by De Saussure's approach has syntagmatic as well as paradigmatic connection, thus it has two sides: the first one is the syntagmatic relation. It traces linearly the sequence of linguistic issues. While the second one is paradigmatic relation. It elaborates the connection between these issues vertically by tracing the autobiographical references between the two versions, the fiction and the real life of the author. According to Lyons (1990: 96) and Crystal (2003:334) syntagmatic relation emerges between items that appear in combination and relation with each other while paradigmatic relation appears in the mutual substitution between items at specific place and time.

Rose (1977: 87) shows that understanding the society in both fiction and life is the same since fiction reflects the real life, common opinions, beliefs, or customs. On the same point Wellek and Warren (1956: 95), asserts that "literature is a social creation which employs language as its medium".

2-De Saussure's Syntagmatic-Paradigmatic Relations

Language is seen by the Swiss structural linguists De Saussure as a related unit from life and fiction. syntagmatic relation shows the connection between elements or items in a sentence or a group of sentences, that is to say, linear sequences. while paradigmatic relation focuses on substitution of events or characters that are stick in the memory of the author to appear in the writing and be spoken on behalf of author in fiction, thus the paradigmatic relation is called as replacer or associative (Bussmann 2006: 855; Mukalel 2006:85)

According to Wicker syntagmatic – paradigmatic relations can be shown through arrows, table or even a diagram like this way:



In the above fictional examples (he) stands for all other mentioned pronouns (she, you, I) , it as a paradigm that stands for personal pronoun while the paradigm of auxiliary (shall) stands for other auxiliaries that are mentioned later like (may, could, drop). Trask (2007: 204) and Hedge (2000: 114) state that the paradigm of verb (visit) stands for (come, speak, drop). This proves that paradigm relation is related to a system that contains of a set choices. So, the form the above arrow directions show how the vertical substitution between sentences works in syntagmatic relations.

3-Syntagmatic-Paradigmatic Relations in plot Construction

Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870) was Born in Portsmouth as the one of eight children, he was the second child of Elizabeth and John Dickens . Part of his childhood is spent in south England, but family moved to London in 1814 .His father worked as a clerk in the Naval Pay Office but because he was continually living beyond his means, he was imprisoned for debt in 1824 and 12-year-old Charles was taken from school and sent to work at a boot-blackening factory. As Charles was a very clever and sensitive boy this dark experience lived for ever in his memory. This engrave sympathy as well as empathy for other suffering This terrible life experience in London appears in many of his novels. At the age of fifteen he was employed by a solicitor firm and studied shorthand. In 1829 he started as a freelance reporter of law classes and in 1831 became a parliamentary reporter. During that period he went through the environment of justice and administration that he would later criticize. Dickens as an author derives benefit from his childhood and youth for his books. The pain of his childhood remain for his entire life as a source of creativity in writing his novel. Almost all his works appeared in serialized versions, monthly or weekly, to be available for all even poor people. (Andrews 2005).

He did not complete his education because he is forced to work at early age in a boot-blackening factory. His father was imprisoned for not paying debts. After three years Dickens returned to school, to begin literary career as a journalist. His success begins by his editing a weekly journal for years. He published fifteen novels, five novellas, hundreds of short stories and non-fiction articles . His suffering is not absent in his novels that takes many forms and adopted by many characters in his novel. He devotes his pen to reform society:

In all practical matters his ideas ran alongside those of people more closely connected with practical thing; he did not initiate, and in his major campaigns he did not succeed . . . it is clear that the immediate effect of Dickens's work was negligible. (House 215)

Dickens' *Hard Times* (1854) will be read through the lens of De Saussure's syntagmatic-paradigmatic relations. Cirilini (2009: 36) shows that "a plot involving elopement followed by capture looks natural and hence these two events are likewise related".

Dickens' *Hard Times* is labeled after the bible's structure to be "Sowing," "Reaping," and "Garnering," it sheds light on English society during the Victorian era by showing part of social and economic pictures of its contemporary life. The setting of the novel occurs in a fictional industrial city called Coketown, north England. The general attitude of the novel is pessimism. It focuses on various social abuses like the state of education, trade unions and marriage law and the role of capitalist elites in exploiting the working class.

Stephen Blackpool is one of the poor innocent men who work in one of Josiah Bounderby's factories. Through this character Dickens will reflect some of personal and public catastrophes like marriage, divorce, suffering of the working class, the injustice of utilitarianism. All these dilemmas are lived by Dickens himself and re-lived in *Hard Times*. Dickens reflects his unsuccessful marriage and his efforts to seek a divorce through Blackpool's painful suffering to do the same. Blackpool tries in vain to get a divorce from his drunkard wife who escapes and returns from time to time but "law's grounds for divorce still too restrictive" (Davis: 1989: 106).

Blackpool is Dickens' voice in reforming and presenting the social abuses. Dickens' voice is so valid in his time to such extent he is regarded as an authorized agency as Berman asserts that "There have been at work among us three great social agencies: the London City Mission; the novels of Mr. Dickens; the cholera" (Berman 2022: 155).

In Blackpool's personality, Dickens inserts his true attitudes concerning Victorian society. He injects in Blackpool his disagreement to the transformation of society to materialism and laissez-faire capitalism. Wilson (1970 : 235) states that "Dickens had constantly championed the poor and the submerged; he had held to his belief in the honesty and industry of the working people of England".

Stephen Blackpool stands in pragmatic relation with Dickens himself. His suffering as a worker and a husband echoes with Dickens' real life. Blackpool is the speaker of the author who shows the bad impact of industrial revolution on the working class such as the bad housing, the diseases as the result of bad housing and the law deflections make Dickens more despair about England's condition:

Stephen looked older, but he had had a hard life. It is said that every life has its roses and thorns; there seemed, however, to have been a misadventure or mistake in Stephen's case, whereby somebody else had become possessed of his roses, and he had become possessed of the same somebody else's thorns in addition to his own. (Dickens: 1995: 56)

4-Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* as a Product of his Autobiographical Experiences

Dickens reflects the real state of the suffering of the working class as Langbaum (1967: 61) states that there is no law at the Victorian era that provides a protection for the workers in side factories and outside. Besides there is no grantee that keeps their future. They are

depicted as mere 'hands'. This label removes their human entity and focuses on the means of 'hand' that will increase the fortune of the rich. says that there was no protection upon.

Dickens presents through Blackpool the issue of 'the divorce plot' (Hager:pviii) that is presented in his most novels. Victorian law almost hinders the divorce because the act of parliament in 1854 that decision requires impossible demands like money and prestige to provide access toward solving marriage. Thus, it is impossible for the common people to get a divorce according to such law even if they suffer from a miserable relation. The unfair law of divorce is addressed in detail through Blackpool and Racial. Dickens presents the two states of divorce of the poor like Blackpool's and Brouderby's marriage. Brouderby stands for easy divorce because of being rich. Blackpool stands in clear paradigmatic relation with Dickens.

Stephen Blackpool's claim for divorce follow the identical steps that Dickens had in his personal life which is impossible under the Victorian act of parliament that simplify this only for the rich. Though Blackpool's wife is immoral and alcoholic and Blackpool fails to get divorce. Dickens addresses this issue in a sympathetic context by presenting the two pure lovers, Blackpool and Rachael who strive to be together. All the good feelings expect the death of Blackpool's wife, but the Dickens receives more pathos after the falling and the death of Stephen and leave Rachel husbandless to care for his drunken wife. Dickens satirizes the law of marriage that is "well, marriage is forever, for better or worse.". Blackpool in his humble words summarizes his personal dilemma which is also Dickens'. Since, he stands in pragmatic relation with him:

"If I do her any hurt, Sir, there's a law to punish me?"

"Of course there is."

"If I flee from her, there's a law to punish me?"

"Of course there is."

"If I marry t'other dear lass, there's a law to punish me?"

"Of course there is." (p.66)

In Blackpool's consulting of his employer about getting divorce, Brouderby summarizes the parliament's response and the horrible stages and discrimination between the rich and the poor in front of the same law. The pragmatic relation is clear when Brouderby reflects the law that Dickens himself falls under as a victim:

Mr. Brouderby, putting his hands in his pockets. "There is such a law". Stephen, subsiding into his quiet manner, and never wandering in his attention, gave a nod. "But it's not for you at all. It costs money. It costs a mint of money". "How much might that be?" Stephen calmly asked. "Why, you'd have to go to the Doctors' Commons with a suit, and you'd have to go to the House of Lords with a suit... (if it was a case of very plain sailing), I suppose from a thousand to fifteen hundred pound," said Mr. Brouderby, "Perhaps twice the money." (p.66)

Blackpool does not stand in pragmatic relation with the author only, but also he represents working class' suffering in Victorian era. Workers like him live in the slum and poor destination. They are poor because of low salary and long hours working. They are uneducated, therefore, they work in dangerous factory which requires no special skill on getting the job done. They are also obedient to their employer and almost never complained about things from their employer. Thus Blackpool stands in pragmatic relation with any Victorian worker.

Josiah Bounderby is a banker owner of a mill in Cocktown, he stands in paradigmatic with the employers of Victorian era under the utilitarianism system that exploits the working class with long hours working in comparison to a little pay. Dickens reflects this character in a way that shows his depreciation of all employers of his time. He is syntagmatic with all the characters of real employers in real life at Dickens' time:

A big, loud man, with a stare, and a metallic laugh. A man made out of a coarse material, which seemed to have been stretched to make so much of him. A man with a great puffed head and forehead, swelled veins in his temples. (12)

This novel reflects a hard times in Dickens's early life as a worker in a blacking warehouse at a factory where he labeled bottles. His formal education was scanty. He shows this through Stephen Blackpool his pain in of the poor condition of the entire working class. Dickens shows his philosophy concerning the suffering working class in his conversation with Bounderby that they are not hands or machines, they are human with souls:

No people, the gentleman ha seen in aw his travels can beat- will never do `tell th sun turns t` ice. Most o` aw rating em as so much power, and reg`lation `em as if they was figures in a soom, or machines: wi`out loves and likens, wi`out memories and inclinations, w`out souls to weary and souls to hope (Dickens 1995: 116)

Another autobiographical event conveys through Blackpool is Dickens' attitudes towards working unions and the violent approach they apply to gain their rights. Before writing *Hard Times*, Dickens saw a real working striking and unionization. He writes an essay on this episode entitles "On Strike". His worker is hero, Blackpool, conveys his clear attitudes when he refuses to unionize which shows Dickens views towards using workers for their benefits.

Dickens attitudes to strike is reflected clearly through Blackpool attitudes towards the working unions and the leaders of such unions. The planed strike in *Hard Times* is related to the memory of the famous Preston cotton stoppage of 1853 By seeing strikers though seeing the fact of the strike as a tragedy for all social parties. Thus, the portrait of Slackbridge, the ranting and despotic union leader in *Hard Times* reflects nothing so much as a middle-class ignorance and fear of trade unionism. Dickens views the leaders of union as tyrannical and criminal conspirators. They move people by false oration besides they are cruel to other individual as the way Slackbridge does in ostracizing the poor Blackpool.

Dickens doesnt like some of the leaders of unions who use violence to evoke workers and use violence to take the workers' rights. This point emerges so clearly in this novel embodied in the description of the persona of Slackbridge, the head of the workers union in Cocktown. Dickens reflected accurately this part of his soul and society. As Langland (1984: 66) states that Charles Dickens' novels are excellent for their representation of society. Dickens draws slackbridge character as Dickens shows that the labor leaders may be as corrupt as the employers; he depicts the laboring class grasping at straws and led by a Judas or a false prophet:

He was not so honest, he was not so manly, he was not so below good- humored; he substituted cunning for their simplicity and passion for their safe solid sense. An ill-made. High -shouldered man, with lowering brows, and his features crushed into an

habitually sour expression, he contrasted most unfavorably, even in his mongrel dress. (106)

These leaders do not believe in peaceful ways of getting rights. Slackbridge who is described as a cunning witty person stands in paradigmatic relation with one of some of Victorian unionist whom Dickens dislike. He satirizes him in the novel. Slackbridge accuses Blackpool of being traitor because the latter refuses to sign a proposal of new regulations in the factory and refuses to join them.

5- Conclusion

Hard Times shows Dickens as an active voice of reforming and a writer who shows the catastrophes of his time without any embellishment. It is the shortest among Dickens ' novel. It is mirrored life with pessimistic touches.

De Saussure's syntagmatic-paradigmatic relations in structural linguistic analysis can be used as a means of analysis on this novel. Some of the characters and episodes are in paradigmatic relations with Dickens' life and episodes in his life time. The syntagmatic relations applied on the characters as well as incidents with their occurrence in Dickens 's life. Most characters who works hard as slave and living in poor slam like Stephen Blackpool who presents another copy of Dickens ' catastrophic marriage and divorce and hardship of life.

Concerning Stephen`s unhappy marriage is quoted from Dickens himself who states to a friend how he loses his love to his wife. Then his new love to Rachael stands for Dickens second love to a woman works with him. The difficulty of solving the marriage and getting a divorce is mirrored exactly through Stephen's hard effort in convincing his employer and society to solve rigidity of the British laws of divorce which requires expensive procedures to get an act of parliament . This incident stands in paradigmatic relation with similar events Dickens confronted to solve his first marriage.

Bounderby stands in paradigmatic relation with character of cruel Victorian employer under utilitarianism that philosophizes and rationalizes the system for their benefits. The using of workers as machines is shown by Dickens in this novel clearly to stand in paradigmatic relation with realistic events. Slackbridge as a character stands in paradigmatic relation with some of Victorian unionizer who turns to be criminal and evoker of violence .

Viewing it differently, Stephen Blackpool does not stand in paradigmatic relation with Dickens only when he falls in a deserted mine and die leaving his lover husbandless while Dickens managed to marry his new love . Striking's of the workers stand in paradigmatic relation with the striking that happened in Dickens' time . It shows Dickens' dislike for this means of gaining rights.

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