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Epitaph in English: A sociolinguistic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the use of language in epitaphs from a sociolinguistic perspective. The current study aims to analyze the syntactic and morphological aspects of epitaphs in English beside examining the use of euphemistic expressions. The study Identifies social factors like gender, age, and status that influence the writing of epitaphs and how the deceased's role in life is portrayed. Finally, the study aims to explore the cultural values and beliefs about death and the afterlife reflected in English epitaphs. This genre has received little attention in studies. In order to achieve the aims of the study, the researcher proposes some hypotheses which are: (i) There are significant differences in the syntactic and morphological structures of English epitaphs. (ii) The use of euphemistic expressions expresses differently in English epitaphs. (iii) The social status, age and

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gender of the deceased are reflected in English epitaphs. (iv) Culture and religion influence the content of English epitaphs. The study analyzes 13 English epitaphs using qualitative research design. The key findings indicate differences in morpho-syntactic structure, with no gender markers used in English epitaphs. implicit euphemisms is found in English epitaphs. Social factors like gender, age, and status are more frequently reflected in English epitaph. There are differences in the linguistic cues used for male versus female epitaphs. The study provides insights into how language reflects cultural and societal norms in funeral rituals.

Key Words: Epitaph, euphemistic expressions, morpho-syntactic structure.

المرثية باللغة الإنجليزية: تحليل لغوي اجتماعي

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المستخلص

تبحث الدراسة في استخدام اللغة في المرثيات من منظور لغوي اجتماعي. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى تحليل الجوانب النحوية والصرفية للمرثيات في اللغة الإنجليزية إلى جانب دراسة استخدام التعبيرات الملتفة. تحدد الدراسة العوامل الاجتماعية مثل الجنس والعمر والحالة التي تؤثر على كتابة المرثيات وكيفية تصوير دور المتوفى في الحياة. وأخيراً، تهدف الدراسة إلى استكشاف القيم والمعتقدات الثقافية حول الموت والحياة الآخرة التي تنعكس في المرثيات الإنجليزية. وقد تلقى هذا النوع القليل من الاهتمام في الدراسات. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة يقترح الباحث بعض الفرضيات وهي: (1) توجد فروق ذات دلالة واضحة في التراكيب النحوية والصرفية للمرثيات الإنجليزية. (2) يتم التعبير عن استخدام التعبيرات الملتفة بشكل مختلف في المرثيات الإنجليزية. (3) تنعكس الحالة الاجتماعية للمتوفى وعمره وجنسه في المرثيات الإنجليزية. (4) تؤثر الثقافة والدين على محتوى المرثيات الإنجليزية. تحلل الدراسة 13 مرثية باللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام تصميم البحث النوعي. تشير النتائج الرئيسية إلى وجود اختلافات في البنية النحوية والصرفية، مع عدم استخدام علامات جنسانية في المرثيات الإنجليزية. تم العثور على العبارات الملتفة الضمنية في المرثيات

الإنجليزية. تتعكس العوامل الاجتماعية مثل الجنس والعمر والحالة بشكل متكرر في المرثية الإنجليزية. هناك اختلافات في الإشارات اللغوية المستخدمة في المرثيات الذكورية مقابل الإناث. تقدم الدراسة نظرة ثاقبة حول كيفية عكس اللغة للمعايير الثقافية والمجتمعية في طقوس الجنازة.

الكلمات الدالة: المرثية، العبارات الملطفة، البنية الصرفية النحوية

1.INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, humans have grappled with the inevitability of mortality, seeking ways to immortalize the memories of their departed loved ones. One such timeless tradition that transcends cultures and civilizations is the writing of epitaphs (Bernhardt-Kabisch, 1967:113). These inscriptions, carved on gravestones or memorials, serve as a lasting tribute to the deceased, preserving their legacies and offering solace to those left behind. From a sociolinguistic perspective, epitaphs offer glimpses into the language and communication practices of specific societies or time periods. Epitaph analysis can provide insights into the social hierarchy of a community by examining the symbols and language used which can indicate the status of the deceased or their family (Pearson, 2003: 69). According to Davies (2002: 101) 'The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites,' studying epitaphs can be a multidisciplinary pursuit. Davies argues that epitaphs can provide insights into various fields, including linguistics, history, sociology, anthropology, genealogy, and literature. As researchers continue to explore these concise yet profound inscriptions, they not only honor the departed but also unlock a treasure trove of knowledge about the past.

The adopted model in this study is an eclectic one. It consists of two main parts, linguistic and sociolinguistic ones. Linguistically, Quirk, et al (1985) and Aziz's (1989) model where sentence types, tense, active and passive constructions, finite and non-finite verb forms, and apposition have been conducted. Moreover, Leech's (1981) theory of euphemisms are used too. In sociolinguistics, Holmes' (2013) social variables and culture analysis are conducted as well. This study aims to Analyze the syntactic and morphological aspects of epitaphs, examine the use of euphemistic expressions in English epitaphs and how it varies depending on the social context in which they are used. Identify the social factors concerning gender, age, status that influence in writing an epitaph and how the deceased's role in his life is reflected. Explore the cultural values and beliefs about death and the afterlife reflected in the cultural context of epitaphs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 EPITAPH AND RELATED TERMS

An epitaph is a brief inscription carved on a gravestone or monument that serves as a written tribute or final message for someone who has passed away. Epitaphs play a significant role in remembering and honoring the deceased through memorials and

plaques as they help preserve the memory of loved ones and bring solace to mourners, as noted by Smith (2015). Their purpose is to summarize an individual's life in a few memorable words for future generations, according to Cohen (1999: 78). Traditionally, epitaphs were beautifully worded inscriptions on monuments that paid respect to the deceased by commemorating them and expressing their character and the grief of their death through lyrical rhyme to evoke remembrance and mourning, as Williams (2008:23) discusses. In antiquity, epitaph inscriptions preserved the memory of important community and national figures, referred to as "historical hailers", ensuring their names and achievements would be remembered for generations, as explained by Thorne (2014). A superscription in verse or prose on a tomb, grave or burial briefly declared the deceased's name, age, qualities, status, virtues, fortunes in life, and manner and time of death, according to Camden (1639) as cited in Brunton (2020: 27).

Epitaph, elegy, and epigram are three forms used throughout history to commemorate the dead, express grief, and honour loved ones. While each state has unique characteristics, they all share a common theme of remembrance and reflection. Elegy is a pensive melancholy poem or a poem expresses sorrow for one who has died (Johanson, 2010: 153). Epigram, on the other hand, is initially a brief poem produced for reminder. Sepulchral notes have been short due to the time and expense of engraving and the space restrictions on stones (Scodel, 1991: 50). An epigraph is a line, a verse, a quotation, or a motto at the beginning of a book, chapter or a poem that indicates its theme(Sharmas, 1998: 51).

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF DEATH IN WESERN CULTURE

Dying is an inevitable transition from life to death. Therefore, the opposite of life is death. Since the dead do not come back, there is no way to reconcile. Inscriptions on tombstones and epitaphs in general could be seen as representing the core of the human condition, which is death. Death continues to be one of the biggest taboos in modern societies. As a result, language users find it difficult to discuss death in straightforward. In order to convey death, they turn to metaphorical language. Thus, death metaphors are found in epitaphs (Allan & Burrige, 2006: 135). Death and the afterlife as Shakespeare called ' the undiscovered country ' from which no one returns (Segal, 2010: 2). However, each culture, religion, and legal system have a unique meaning of death and a different definition of when life ends. Since the dawn of civilization, the fundamental fears and uncertainties about the nature and stage of death have impacted cultural production. The same goes for people's ambiguous and anxious attitudes regarding death. (Vidal & Blanco, 2014: 1).

Nearly all Christians believe their afterlife will likely include connection with God, peacefulness, and reuniting with loved ones. Few, however, are formally included in the Christian tradition's canonical resurrection teaching. The immortality of the soul, combined with resurrection in Christianity from the fourth century but is not a significant New Testament doctrine, strongly correlates with many of these beliefs. Americans agree with these criteria to some extent (Segal, 2010: 9). Lakoff and Turner (1989) examined common euphemisms for death. In terms of root metaphors, "LIFE IS BEING HERE"

and "DEATH IS DEPARTURE" come to mind, as well as "passed away" and "was taken from us." However, many religious traditions hold that a person has a soul separate from their physical body and thus literally views death as both a departure and a release. Additionally, the usage may be metaphorical for someone conversant with such a religious system, but it is still founded on the primary metaphor. "DEATH IS THE DEPARTURE OF AN IMMATERIAL SOUL." It is necessary to consider the cultural, religious, and occasionally even political circumstances to comprehend the use of one of these terms (Braman, 2004: 41).

2.3 EPITAPH IN CHRISTIANITY

In Christianity, epitaphs hold profound significance as they offer glimpses into the lives of individuals who have lived out their faith and left a lasting impact on the world. These final words engraved in stone often capture the essence of their relationship with God, their hope for eternity, and their influence on others (Smith, 2020: 45). It took a long time for a distinctly Christian epigraphic culture to form, as Cooley (2012: 63-64) demonstrates. The formulae of epitaphs share characteristics with those of paganism, much as Christian funerary art does when it borrows and modifies the meaning of old motifs like the good shepherd. Because Christian funeral customs and the religious beliefs underpinning them, they are intrinsically linked to Christianity. Christian epitaphs exhibit a combination of epigraphic characteristics shared by non-Christian inscriptions and aspects uniquely Christian in character. According to Kingston (2023: 35), inscriptions complement the frescoes by offering literary context and further elaborating on the narratives depicted in the paintings. Biblical words, prayers, hymns, and liturgical writings are frequently incorporated in inscriptions. They act as teaching aids, reinforcing the teachings of the faith and giving community members guidance. The names of the departed and epitaphs honouring their lives and expressing Christian confidence in the resurrection are also included in the inscriptions.

2.4 TYPES AND FEATURES OF EPITAPH

Epitaphs go beyond as being a mere announcement of demise; rather, they serve as evidence of how humankind views mortality. Tombstone inscriptions are unquestionably very diverse, and this diversity is precisely where much of their value lies. Epitaphs are a hybrid genre, much like obituaries, in which publicity and information coexist with objectivity and passion. There are two types of epitaphs: informative and opinion. Informative epitaphs are objective inscriptions that provide basic information (such as the name of the decedent, the dates of birth and death or the age at death). Opinion epitaphs are private and intimate funeral texts in which feelings and emotions, as well as social and political concerns, play a significant role. The table below lists the qualities of both types of epitaphs (García et al., 2013: 205). When it describes the traits and deeds of the honourable man, an epitaph honouring the deceased is rightly regarded as the noblest and pure form of praise. Private virtues are unquestionably just as deserving of this honour as public ones, and the titles of a good citizen, friend, or father amply justify being inscribed on brass or marble. A decent man's tomb can partially fill the void left by his absence and, by encouraging respect for his memory, serves as a stand-in for the opportunity to

learn from and emulate him. Epitaphs can be viewed as a way for the living to communicate with the deceased or a means of giving serious instructions (Pettigrew, 1857: 18-19). Unquestionably, an epitaph ought to be brief as Scodel (1991: 2) has mentioned because of space limitations and expense, and the time involved in inscribing a monument, and portray feelings with beauty and tenderness. An epitaph should contain everything that expresses love, sadness, faith, hope, resignation, and purity. It should be relevant to the buried person and should not take too long to be remembered. Its purpose is to preserve important memories and arouse empathy in the viewer. Honest and sincere sorrow is never talkative. It should refer to the common fate of all in communicating solace and warning and instruct people to look up from the cemetery to a higher plane of existence (Pettigrew, 1857: 25-26).

3. RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA ANALYSIS

the research method in this study is qualitative method, namely analyzing of thirteen English epitaphs. Data collection techniques are carried out by actual visits to the cemetery and taking pictures of the various tombstones. The researcher analyzes epitaphs using two level of Analysis Grammatical Level and Social Level. The first level implies a Morpho-syntactic analysis, while the second level carries the analysis of social factors with euphemisms and cultural analysis. Epitaphs are analyzed depending on the adopted model and as it is shown in the following figures below:

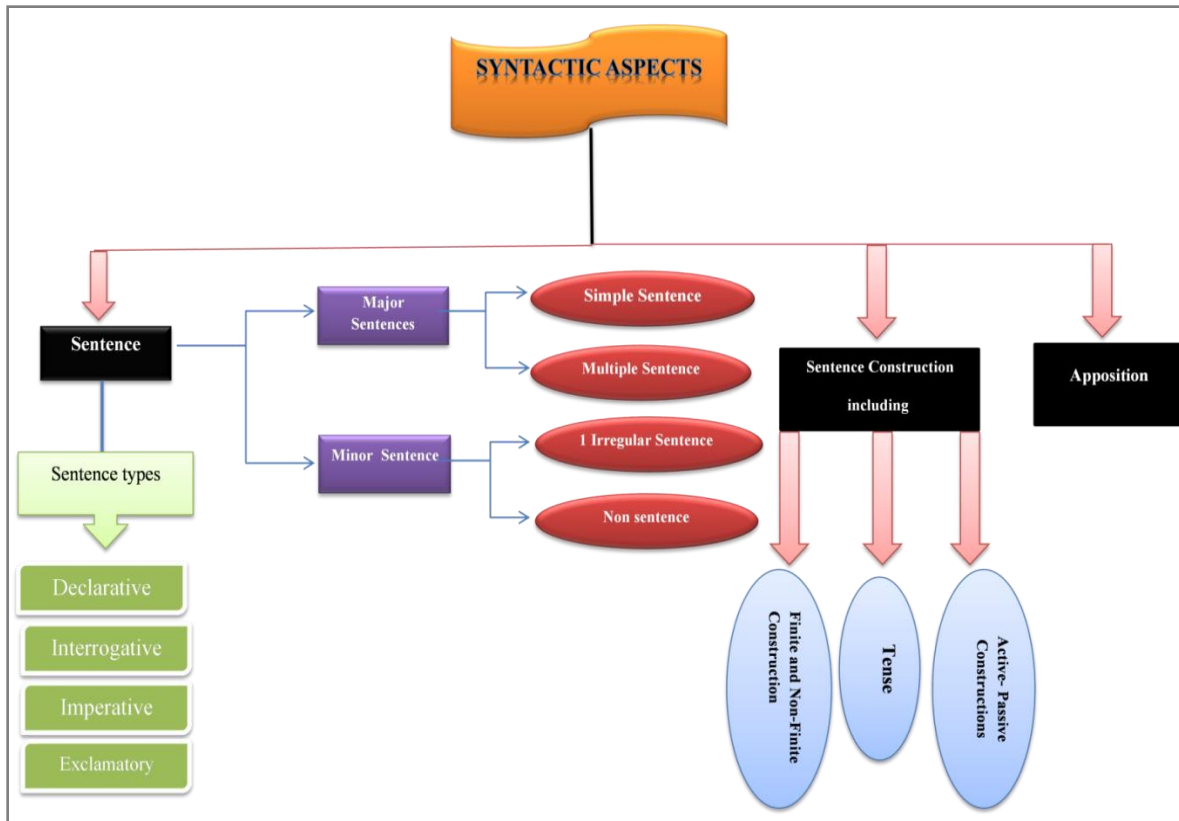


Figure 3.1 The Syntactic Aspects

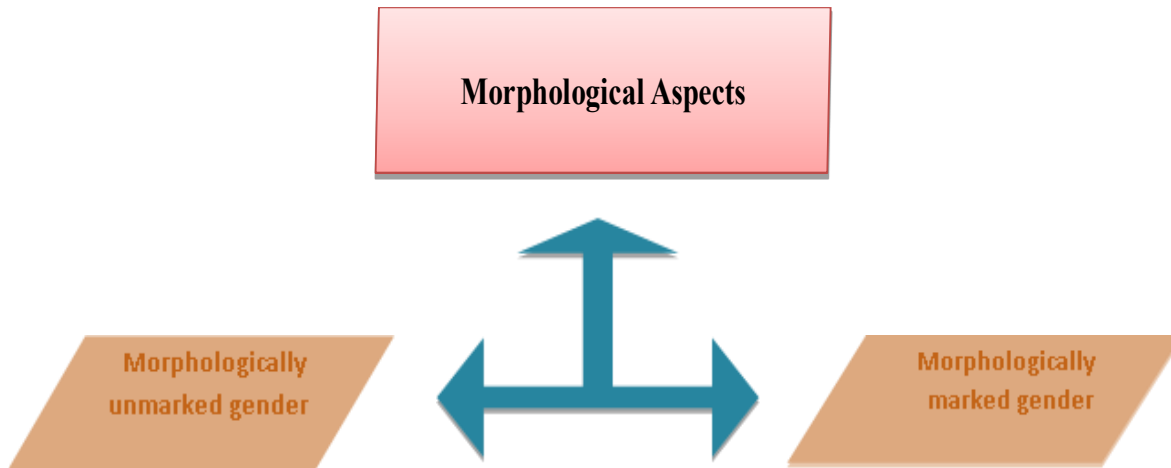


Figure 3.2 The Morphological Aspects

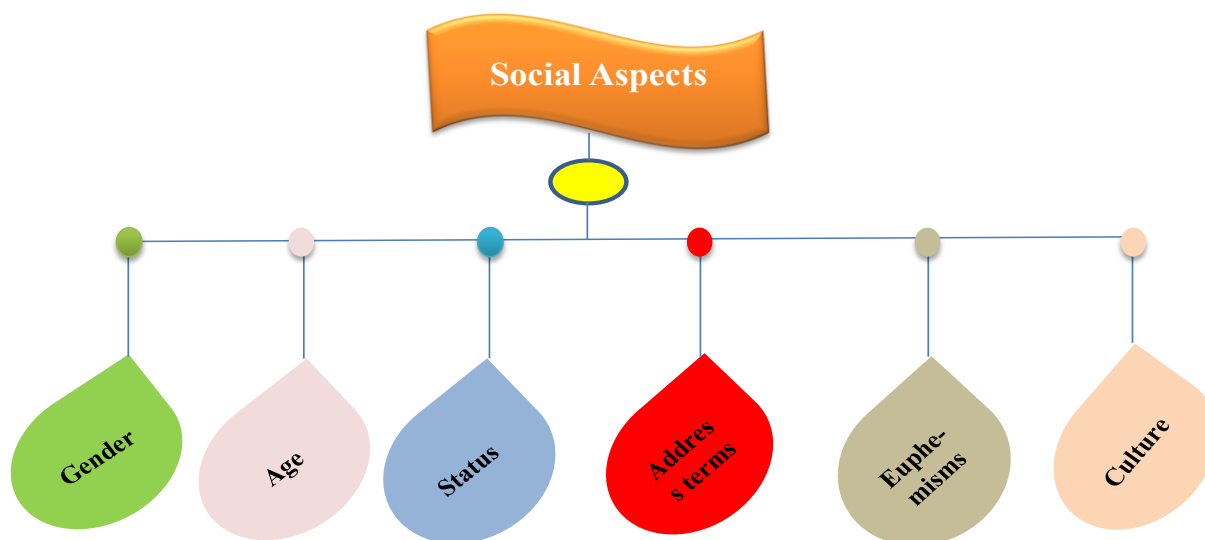


Figure 3.3 The Social Aspects

3.1 The Procedure of Analysis

Firstly, a brief description of each epitaph is set in advance under its picture with their textual components written down. Next, the linguistic analysis which focuses on the morpho-syntactic. Syntactically, it tackles sentence structures, namely, major and minor sentences, and their types. Moreover, Syntactic analysis also handles passivation, tense, finite and non-finite verb form and apposition. Then morphologically, it is restricted to gender morphemes in terms of free and bound ones. This sublevel of analysis appears when the epitaph under analysis contains gender morphemes, otherwise it is skipped.

The outcome of this linguistic level of analysis is going to be the bread and butter of a comparative study of both languages' grammatical structure, word choice, and sentence structure

Finally, the sociolinguistic analysis which explores the social factors (gender, age, status), whereas, in gender, personal names are ignored because they are common facts, yet only the morpho-syntactic genders are analyzed as a social factor. In addition, address terms, euphemistic expression, and cultural analysis that influence how epitaphs are written in English also examined. The analysis will also explore the role of language in shaping social identity and relationships.

4. SAMPLES OF ANALYSIS

Sample 1



This gravestone's epitaph which is documentary one is taken from Evergreen cemetery in The United States – Arizona. This grave marker is a dual one which stands for a husband and his wife as it is stated in its textual component:

"LIVE ALL YOU CAN"

PROFESSOR ROBERT EMMETT TINDALL

1/2/34 - 7/15/13

LINDA BROWN LYNN

7/15/43

- **Grammatical Level**

1. Morphological Analysis

There is no gender morpheme in this epitaph.

2. Syntactic Analysis

The sentence "LIVE ALL YOU CAN" is an imperative Minor sentence consisting of a finite verb "LIVE" which is in the base form indicating present simple tense in active form, an elliptical subject implied as the reader or listener "you", and an object the noun phrase "ALL YOU CAN". The sentence does not have a specific subject, indicating that it is a general statement applicable to anyone. The sentence is a directive or command urging the listener or reader to live their life fully. It is also possible that the sentence can be interpreted as a suggestion or advice rather than a command. There is no apposition in this epitaph.

- **Social Level**

The epitaph 'LIVE ALL YOU CAN' has been used on the tombstones of two individual Professor Robert Emmett Tindall and Linda Brown Lynn. The choice of this epitaph may reveal insights into the deceased's social context and personal values.

Gender: The imperative verb 'live' suggests a sense of agency and empowerment in the sentence 'LIVE ALL YOU CAN'. This language use may be associated with masculine speech styles prioritizing assertiveness and independence. This epitaph does not explicitly indicate gender. However, 'you' which is gender-neutral suggests a universal message not specific to any particular gender.

Age: The most straightforward way to estimate age from an epitaph is to look for birth and death dates. Thus, by mentioning the birthdate (1/2/34) and death date (7/15/13) on the gravestone of Professor Tindall, one can infer that the deceased 'ROBERT' is an old man at the time of his passing. Another clue is the use of the title "Professor" which suggests a level of education and experience that may be associated with an older individual. Linda's epitaph provides her name and birthdate but does not include a date of death which means that she is still alive at the time of writing the epitaph.

Age is critical for choosing the epitaph (Live all you can), which stands as a wisdom from old, experienced individuals, thus age can be manifested in the text of epitaph.

Status: The inclusion of the full name and title of Professor Tindall suggests a high level of respect and deference, which may reflect his perceived social status and authority. However, the inclusion of Linda Brown Lynn's name without a title or honorific may suggest a lower level of social status or power. Without any additional context or information, it is difficult to infer Linda's social role or her accomplishments or contributions.

The title "Professor" given to 'ROBERT' suggests that he has held an academic position. His professional title suggests that this is an essential aspect of his identity and significant achievement.

Address forms: The epitaph combines address forms, including second person pronoun, full names and a title. Using the second person pronoun "YOU" creates a sense of direct address and personal connection with the reader, making the message more impactful. The full name is used in formal form for both ROBERT EMMETT TINDALL and LINDA BROWN LYNN. These address forms differ from traditional Western naming conventions, typically including a first, middle initial, and last name. The use of the title "Professor" for Tindall indicates that he has held an academic position, likely in a university setting. The absence of a title for Lynn suggests that she is not a public figure, nor she has held a notable position.

Euphemism: The epitaph "LIVE ALL YOU CAN" is a common expression encouraging people to live life to the fullest. It is not necessarily euphemistic but a way of softening the impact of death by such uplifting message.

Cultural analysis: 'LIVE ALL YOU CAN' has an influence on society. It motivates individuals to pursue their life and embrace chances in order to accomplish their aspirations. This message holds significance beyond experiences. It reflects broader cultural values that emphasize the importance of pursuing one's passions, taking risks and living life authentically.

The simplicity and brevity of this phrase contribute to its memorability and impactful, allowing it to resonate with a wider audience. The use of capital letters with white color is to attract the reader and to emphasize the idea of epitaph. The background is black so that it makes the white color bright and condensed. The epitaph is written with white color which stands for purity and innocence.

Sample 2



This gravestone's epitaph which is mixed between documentary and opinion one is taken from Evergreen cemetery in Arizona – The United States. This headstone is an individual one which stands for a child as it is stated in its textual component:

Angel on earth, now angel in heaven,
our baby we love,
Francis Glenn Ballard
Born – July 29. 1949
Died – December 21. 1959

- **Grammatical Level**

1.Morphological Analysis

"*Angel on earth, now angel in heaven, our baby we love*" does not contain any gender marker that could bring to light the deceased gender. '*Angel*' and '*Baby*' which set forth in the epitaph can be indicate both male and female.

2.Syntactic analysis

Epitaphs are a commonly used to honour and remember loved ones who have passed away. The language and structure (The wording and format) of epitaphs differ based on cultural and religious influences. This particular epitaph acknowledges the deceased as an " angel" who has now become an " presence, in heaven."

The epitaph's sentence, which is a minor non-sentence, is made up of two phrases and one clause that are separated by commas. The first phrase, 'Angel, on Earth' is a noun phrase sentence. The second phrase, 'now angel in heaven' is also a noun phrase.

The clause 'our baby we love' is an independent clause. The possessive pronoun 'our' indicates that the deceased was a beloved family member. The pronoun 'we' signifies that it is the family members who are grieving and expressing their love, for the deceased. The verb 'love' indicates the strong emotional bond between the family members and the deceased. The whole clause function as a supplement to the preceding clause. 'Born' and 'died' function as the predicate of the sentence.

The shift from past tense to present tense in the second phrase - "now angel in heaven" - marks the child's transition from life to death and suggests a belief in an afterlife and the child's continued existence as an angel in heaven.

- **Social level**

-Gender: The interpretation of gender cues in language can be complex and nuanced, especially concerning metaphors. In the phrase "*Angel on earth, now angel in heaven, our baby we love,*" it is difficult to infer the gender of the baby without additional context since the expression '*angel*' could refer to male or female individual.

-Age: The epitaph provides clues for determining the age of *Francis Glenn Ballard*. However, there are a few possible indicators that can be explored.

- Using the term 'baby' suggests that Francis Glenn Ballard was likely a young child at the time of his death.
- Mentioning dates or birth/death years makes it easy to determine a specific age for Francis Glenn Ballard.

- **Status:** '*Baby*' and '*angel*' are two indicators of the child status.

-Address forms: This epitaph contains informal address forms, (angel and baby) are forms that used in this epitaph , These are often terms of endearment used between friends or family members.

- **Euphemisms:** There is no euphemism used in the epitaph. This epitaph contains no explicit euphemisms. However, it is common, in many cultures to refer to a loved one as an 'angel,' which can be considered a euphemistic way of referring to death. "*Angel on earth, now angel in heaven*" is a phrase commonly used to describe the passing of an individual. It serves as a way to soften the pain of the loss conveys a sense of hope and spirituality.

- **Cultural Analysis:** The epitaph reflects cultural beliefs and values surrounding death and the afterlife. The term "angel" suggests a belief in a spiritual realm beyond physical existence. "Angel on Earth" and "Angel in Heaven" have different meanings and evolved across cultures. In some culture 'Angel in Heaven' is used to describe someone who has passed away and believed to have ascended to heaven.

The phrase implies that the person was good and virtuous and is now in a better place, much like an angel. In religious contexts, 'Angel on Earth' can refer to a belief that angels walk among us in human form, carrying out God's work . On the hand 'Angel in Heaven' suggests the idea that angels reside in heaven and fulfill Gods wishes. the word 'angel' suggests a belief in an afterlife and a hope for a reunion with the loved one. This belief can be found in religions, including Christianity.

This epitaph has engraved on a tombstone of gray color. This color always associates with death and symbolizes the end of live, though it has integrated with light gray (Mixed with white) to give the sense of innocent and comfort since the deceased is a little child.

Sample 3



This gravestone's epitaph which is mixed between documentary and opinion one is taken from Evergreen cemetery in Arizona – The United States. The grave marker is an individual one which stands for a deceased as it is stated in its textual component:

"Gordie"

Gordon F. Hopke JR.

FEB 7,1962

AUG 15,1985

"LOVE AND KINDNESS WAS HIS CREED"

- **Grammatical Level**

1.Morphological Analysis

The epitaph "*LOVE AND KINDNESS WAS HIS CREED*" has the possessive adjective (his) as a gender marker indicating that the person in question is a male one.

2.Syntactic Analysis

Epitaphs are commonly used to honor and remember loved ones who have passed away. They often include a short phrase or sentence that captures the essence of the person's life, values, or achievements. While there are no set rules for writing an epitaph, many different ways convey the qualities and accomplishments of the person being remembered. They are usually written in the past tense to acknowledge that the person has passed away. Using past tense in epitaphs is important because it helps to create a sense of finality and closure.

The epitaph 'LOVE AND KINDNESS WAS HIS CREED' is a Major simple declarative sentence contains of a subject 'LOVE AND KINDNESS' and a predicate 'WAS HIS CREED'. The subject is a noun phrase composed of two coordinated nouns ('LOVE' and 'KINDNESS'). The predicate is a verb phrase consisting of the copula 'WAS' and a noun phrase ('HIS CREED'), 'WAS' is a finite past tense verb as it agrees with the subject in number (by considering that love and kindness are a singular entity or belief held by the deceased rather than two separate entities) and tense. The sentence is in the active voice.

- **Social level**

- **Gender:** Based on the available information, it is likely that Gordie Gordon F. Hopke Jr. was male. The use of 'JR.' in his epitaph suggests that he was the son of someone with the same name. An alternative method for determining gender is analyzing language use, such as using pronouns and gendered language. In the given epitaph, using the pronoun 'his' suggests that the deceased is identified as male.

-**Age:** the deceased age is clearly stated by mentioning his birth and death date. The phrase written on the tombstone also gives an indication that the person was not child when he died, so the word “*creed*” is more appropriate for an old person rather than a child.

-**Status:** The epitaph of "Gordie" Gordon F. Hopke Jr., emphasizes his personality traits rather than his accomplishments or societal positions. This epitaph can have a powerful impact on how the deceased is remembered. It highlights his character and values rather than his status or achievements. It can also remind those who read it to prioritize kindness and love in their own lives.

-**Address forms:** Gordie Hopkes epitaph features an address format, including his initial and the suffix 'JR.', after his name. This distinction is important as it sets him apart, from others who share the name making it clear that this epitaph is specifically dedicated to Gordie Hopke Jr.

"Gordie" is commonly used as a nickname or preferred name, for Gordon F. Hopke. The inclusion of the F.", in his name suggests that it likely represents a middle name. The addition of "JR." indicates that he is the junior indicating that he shares the name as his father.

- **Euphemisms:** no euphemisms are used.

-**Cultural Analysis:** Epitaphs reflect cultural and societal norms at the time of the individual's death. The use of the word "creed" also has cultural connotations, particularly in relation to religion. In religious contexts, a creed is a statement of faith or belief central to a particular religion or denomination. By using the word "creed" in Gordie's epitaph, it could be interpreted that love and kindness were not only important to him personally but were also values that he believed were central to his faith or spirituality.

The use of color symbolism in epitaphs has a rich cultural and historical context. In many cultures, black and grey are associated with mourning and death, representing the end of life and the passage into the afterlife. Black color is used on a gray background, the use of these colors in epitaphs can serve as a reminder of the deceased's life and legacy, while also acknowledges the pain and loss that their passing has caused.

Sample 4



This gravestone's epitaph which is mixed between documentary and opinion one is taken from Evergreen cemetery in Arizona – The United States. This flat gravestone is an individual one which stands for a *Mother* as it is stated in its textual component:

VIRGINIA ANN DE LUCA

Dec. 1, 1927 - Oct. 1, 2006

Mother, you will be forever loved

- **Grammatical Level**

1.Morphological Analysis

Morphology plays a crucial role in understanding the grammar and syntax of a language. In this epitaph, "Mother, you will be forever loved", the noun 'mother' is considered as morphologically unmarked gender morpheme as it indicates that the deceased is a female one.

2.Syntactic Analysis

In this epitaph, the sentences "Mother, you will be forever loved" the sentence is a Major declarative sentence. In this case, the statement expresses the idea that the person being addressed (the mother) will be loved for an indefinite period of time.

The sentence is written in a passive grammatical structure since the subject isn't mentioned. The passive voice is used to indicate the importance of the message entrusted to the object (Mother). The auxiliaries elements (will be) carry the tense and aspect , it contain the finite part . The lexical meaning carried by the non-finite part which is the

past participle verb (loved). The adverb (forever) used to mean that something will continually happen .

"Mother, you will be forever loved" has *mother* as an opposition in the sentence.

- **Social Level**

Analyzing this epitaph from a sociolinguistic perspective reveals several facts since Sociolinguists study how language and society interact.

The sentence "Mother, you will be forever loved" carries a strong social aspect, reflecting the interpersonal relationship between the speaker(s) and the mother.

-Gender: Epitaphs can expose stereotypes about gender and connotations. The word "mother" in the epitaph, "*Mother, you will be forever loved,*" denotes a female who was deceased and most likely had children. This reinforces the traditional gender norms and notions that women are nurturers and caregivers.

-Age: The inclusion of the dates 1927 and 2006 personalize the epitaph and provide a sense of the individual's life span suggesting that the mother lived for 79 year, in addition describing her as a (mother) indicates that she isn't a little girl.

-Status: "*Mother, you will be forever loved*" carries a strong social aspect, reflecting the interpersonal relationship between the speaker(s) and the mother. It is likely that the departed was a cherished and significant figure in those who knew them. The phrase "forever loved" implies that the person who wrote the epitaph held a deep affection for their mother and that her love will always be remembered. For those grieving, the process of choosing an epitaph and designing a memorial can be a way to honour their loved one and begin the healing process.

-Address forms: The deceased is being addressed as (mother) instead of addressing her by mentioning her profession or occupation while she was alive. A clear message from the speaker or the writer of the epitaph to emphasize the relationship that binds him\her with the deceased. This choice of address form is appropriate for a family member or loved one, as it conveys a sense of closeness and intimacy.

Beside the deceased first, middle and last name is mentioned, the second person address form, 'you', is used to directly address the deceased. This form is often used in epitaphs to convey a sense of personal connection and intimacy with the deceased.

-Euphemism: No euphemism is found, instead, a simple and direct expression of love and remembrance for the deceased mother is used. the phrase "forever loved" is a common used in this epitaphs to express the idea that the deceased will always be cherished and remembered.

-Cultural Analysis: Epitaphs are often used to commemorate the lives of loved ones, and as such, they can provide insight into the cultural values and beliefs of a particular time and place. The language and content of epitaphs can be influenced by historical events and cultural movements that shape how people think about death and remembrance. This epitaph reflects a sentiment of enduring love and respect for the deceased. The use of the word "forever" suggests a belief in an afterlife or eternal existence. The use of the term "Mother" suggests a strong emphasis on family and maternal relationships. This reflects the cultural value of family as a central unit of society.

Cultural and social factors can influence an epitaph's choice of address form. For example, in some cultures, it is common to use informal and personalized way of addressing. Forms such as "beloved mother" or "dear dad", may be preferred to express emotional closeness and affection.

In many cultures, black and grey are associated with mourning and death, representing the end of life and the passage into the afterlife. Black color is used on a gray background, the use of these colors in epitaphs can serve as a reminder of the deceased's life and legacy, while also acknowledges the pain and loss that their passing has caused.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Here is a summary of the key findings from the analysis of American English epitaphs:

1.English epitaph use verbal sentence only. Major declarative sentence is used, and in other cases the Minor sentence (IrrSs and non-sentence) are used to serve the same purpose. Passive voice is used for the sake of diversity in writing the epitaph.

2. Sentences in English contain no gender markers, so that the deceased gender is rarely known except when third person singular pronoun is used or some morphologically unmarked gender nouns such as *'father'*
3. The observation indicates that gender influenced in writing epitaph. Whereas males were described by their accomplishments, females were often portrayed as wives, mothers and daughter.
4. It is shown that the age of the deceased matters a lot in the construction of epitaph. Older people's epitaph tend to have more address form to show the deceased's age and status.
5. Address Forms in English epitaph are of less importance. First, second, third, with last names sometime are mentioned. Other address forms are also chosen to be definitional phrases, such as the deceased military rank, occupational title and academic level... etc. .
6. Euphemistic language is rarely used in English epitaphs to soften the impact of the deceased's death.
7. English epitaphs are a reflection of the cultural context in which they were written. The language used in epitaphs can provide insight into the beliefs, values, traditions of the deceased and their community and to appreciate the diversity of human experience.
8. The most commonly used colors in the English epitaph are black and white. Sometimes gray is also noticed in gravestones. All of these colors are used as a symbol of death and mourning.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Here is a summary of the key conclusions from the analysis of English epitaphs:

1. With respect to textual analysis, English epitaph's sentences is written in verbal sentences varied between major and minor (non-sentence and IrrSs) ones. Finite and non-finite verbs were also found in English epitaph. Passive voice is often included in English epitaphs. It is also discovered that declarative sentence is the most commonly form which is used in English epitaph.

2. English language is a gender neutral language. The deceased gender might be inferred only if the epitaph contains some morphologically unmarked gender nouns such as mother or third person singular pronouns.

3. English epitaphs do not contain euphemisms in the explicit sense, but they carry within phrases that convey a positive sense to the reader. This verifies the third hypothesis and answers the third question of the study.

4. In English, epitaphs often reflect the social status of the deceased, with phrases such as "*Beloved husband*" or "*professor*" used to convey the deceased's role whether in their family or work.

5. The deceased's age and gender are the other aspect reflected by the text of the epitaph in English through the use of address terms. Age is sometimes known through the date of birth and death. There are differences in the linguistic cues used, For instance , male epitaphs use more formal titles and names related to occupation or status, while female epitaphs use more familial titles and names.

7. Epitaphs reflect cultural norms, values, and beliefs, for instance, in English epitaph, we can gain insights into the cultural norms and values of the community, the epitaphs often focus on individual achievement and personal attributes

8. Color symbolism is a powerful tool used to create a mood or atmosphere that enhances the reader's experience and adds depth. In epitaphs, for instance, the use of white and black colors can create a sense of balance and contrast, they may symbolize the contrast between life and death and drawing attention to the most important elements of the text.

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