Mechanisms of Semantic Isotopy Between Arabic Rhetoric and Western Studies

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Abstract:

Isotopy is a structural component that organizes discursive and semantic generation and expansion. Therefore, it is unlimited in terms of the number of components formed and accumulated on the horizontal structure of discourse. Its importance lies in the interpretative capabilities it provides to the reader, based on the adopted interpretative strategy and on isotopy's ability to extend across the discourse level by developing a hypothetical nucleus, considered a center capable of reproduction and generation. This could be a title of a poetry collection, an introduction, a preface, or a statement, where reproduction and generation rely on the accumulation and repetition of semiotic and/or contextual units in their relationship at the level of semantic productivity, as indicated by the discourse within the referential context, including spatial and temporal determinants and socio-cultural indicators that go beyond content to expression and formation. It establishes interpretive meaning by combining isotopy of content with isotopy of expression, and its effect on organizing the text in terms of its growth, generation, and semantic coherence.

Keywords: Isotopy, Meaning, Text, Interpretation, Rhetorical Image.

INTRODUCTION

Literature has always been, and continues to be, a linguistic activity that deviated from conventions and tradition, and has taken on a rebellious spirit that lifted it from its conventional

context into a new context unique to it and distinguishing it. Thus, as a form of transgression that carries a semantic flow, it is pursued by the poet and matters to the reader, armed with a system of values and concepts. The shared discourse becomes an artistic canvas upon which each party paints their creative images. This accompanies the multiplicity found in various linguistic units, for we do not think except through words, and we do not trust our abstract ideas until we give them an objective character, distinguishing them from their subjective projections, and then recording them in an external form that contains the highest internal effectiveness, which becomes evident when words express it. In this way, the speech process is established in a manner that causes an eruption sweeping through the expressive energies inherent in the core of language, transforming it into a network of intersecting meanings, thereby composing a qualitative fabric of discourse.

"If the unity of semantic dimension is the steering wheel of speech in its journey between the two ends of the dialogue system, after the linguistic event has taken on a compelled character, then this remains the essential element in the originality of the phenomenon as an objective entity subject to analysis and rationalization. As for the accidental deviations and sudden transformations that affect phenomena, they are to be viewed through the lens of accumulated incidental events occurring occasionally upon the essential phenomenon[1]."

Perhaps this is what causes language in its evolution to be subject to a system of stylistic practices in its conflicting relationships that define its meanings and implications. This explains its functioning within a neighboring relationship and its friction with the extra-linguistic field. The set of concepts defined by the nature of language in its verbal and expressive usages—or what is termed style—forms a coherence that assumes the expression of an aesthetic system, including assertion and suggestion, isotopy and contrast, all of which define the relationship between word and meaning.

"And I wonder: were words not created for meanings? Are they not their servants, and subject to their rule? Are they not signs of them and their indicators, established to refer to them? How then can one conceive that meanings precede or come before them in the mind? If that were the case, then names of things would have been established before the things themselves were known and before they even existed! I don't know what to say about a notion that leads its proponents into this kind of absurdity and poor reasoning[2]."

1- Nour El-Din Al-Sadd, Stylistics and Discourse Analysis, Houma Publishing and Distribution House, Vol. 1, 1997, p. 88.

2- Abdul Qadir Al-Jurjani, The Proofs of Inimitability, Qutaiba Publishing House, Damascus, Syria, 1983, p. 417.

Furthermore, reaching "an understanding of the meaning of discourses requires establishing a new relationship between the various concepts that describe language and define its referential function." This is expressed through assertion, which carries an informative communicative function, and the secondary language that results from it—suggestive language—which expresses additional meanings that layer upon one another within the descriptive language, charging the message and giving it a unique tone or distinctive hue[3]. This is what causes language to transform from its assertive reality, which points to references specific to language, into a semantic interplay that involves suggestion through semantic transformations.

Moreover, to say that literary discourse—and poetic discourse in particular—is a suggestive language confirms the existence of a transformation process that activates and mobilizes the latent power in signs. Assertion and suggestion allow the text to function and move, as if it were a game that produces a kind of illusion[4]. The issue of (assertion and suggestion) generates another concept: semantic isotopy. Greimas observed that "spiritual pleasure lies in discovering two different semantic homogeneities within a single text assumed to be homogeneous[5]." So, what is the essence of this concept, and what are its Arabic roots?

1. Semantic Isotopy in Arabic Rhetoric:

This corresponds to what the Arabs called "mushākala", and this concept was associated with opposition, as both represent two central principles. It corresponds to the concepts of semantic isotopy and contrast. The concept of mushākala was defined as: "To mention something using the word of something else because of their occurrence together," as in[6]:

They said: Suggest something and we'll cook it for you;

I said: Then cook me a cloak and a shirt.

And in the Almighty's saying: "[The] coloring (ṣibghah) of God"; (Al-Baqara: 138). And "You know what is in myself, but I do not know what is in Yourself." (Al-Ma'ida: 116).

Mushākala comes from shākala, meaning to resemble or match; it was said to mean likeness or counterpart[7]. Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī mentioned in his book Al-'Umda the concept of mushtaraka

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3- J. Mechel Adam, Linguistics and Literary Discourse, Larousse Bookstore, 1976, Canada, p. 92.
4- Ibid., p. 92.
5- Ibid., p. 97.
6- A poem by Abu Al-Raqa'am, Ahmad bin Muhammad Al-Antaki, in which he says: "I suggest something to him," where "najid" means "we improve."
7- Muhammad bin Ali Al-Sakaki, Miftah Al-Ulum (The Key to the Sciences), edited by Naeem Zarzour, Dar Al-Balagha – Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, Lebanon, 2nd edition.

(participation) as a type of shared naming, and he defined its types by saying: "It has different kinds. Some are in wording, others in meaning. Those in wording are of three types[8]:

- First, when the two words refer to one definition and are derived from one root—this is defined sharing.

- The second type is when the word can carry two interpretations: one that suits the intended meaning and another that doesn't, with no indication of which is meant.

- The third type is not from these at all—it includes all the conventional words used by the speaker."

He illustrated this with the line by Al-Farazdaq (long meter): And none among the people resembled him but a king, His mother's father alive, and his father near him.

Al-Baghdadi defined it in his book Khizānat al-Adab by saying: "It is when the poet uses in his verse a word that is shared between two meanings, either originally or derivatively, and the listener's mind is led to the meaning the poet intends, then at the end of the verse he brings something that confirms that the intended meaning is different from what the listener had assumed."

Al-Nabulsi mentioned it in his book Nafahāt al-Azhār, defining it as[9]: "It is to mention something using the word of something else because of their occurrence together," as in the Almighty's saying: 'And the recompense of an evil is an evil like it' (42: 40). Al-Qazwini also defined it with the same definition in Al-Idāḥ fī ʿUlūm al-Balāgha.

It was said about it, as in the Almighty's saying: "[The] coloring of God" (*Al-Baqara* 138), which is an emphatic verbal noun in accusative form derived from His saying: "We believe in God" (*Al-Baqara* 136). The meaning is "God's purification," because faith purifies souls. God has colored us with a faith-coloring like no other, and purified us with a purification like no other. The term *coloring* (ṣibghah) was used here for the purpose of *mushākala* (analogical expression), even though the word *dye* (ṣibghah) was not mentioned earlier, because the contextual clue—the reason for revelation— indicates it. It refers to the practice of Christians immersing their children in yellow water (baptism) [10].

8- Inam Fawal Akkawi, The Detailed Dictionary in Rhetorical Sciences (Al-Bayan, Al-Badee', and Al-Ma'ani), Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, Lebanon, 2nd edition, 1996, p. 649.
9- Ibid., p. 659.
10- Al-Khatib Al-Qazwini, Jalal Al-Din Muhammad bin Abdul Rahman, Al-Idah fi Ulum Al-Balagha, edited by Abdul Qadir Hussein, Al-Adab Library, 1st edition, 1986, p. 396.

The same point was mentioned in *Bughyat al-Īḍāḥ li-Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ* by 'Abd al-Muʿṭī al-Ṣaʿīdī, about mentioning a thing with the word of something else due to its association with it—whether by using a word contrary to the associated one or suitable to it[11].

Al-Jāḥiẓ pointed out that *mushākala* is[12]: "A principle that organizes poetic speech and reaches it at the moment of its very formation, at its core, and continues to govern and direct it. It is a rule that unites the fates of words with the fates of meanings, according to a system by which the poem becomes like one single word—its beginning indistinguishable from its end. Each verse becomes as if it were one word, and the entire word as if it were a single letter."

Thus, it is one of the foundational principles of poetics.

Then also, regarding the resemblance of words to meanings or the harmony between the text and its content, Ibn Ṭabāṭabā referred to[13]: "The necessity of correspondence between meanings and words, for every meaning must be given its due expression and clothed in words that resemble it, so it appears in the finest attire and most splendid form, avoiding what disgraces it from trivial speech and vulgar wording. He also assigns to meanings words that suit them—making them beautiful in one context and ugly in another, like an ornament for a beautiful woman that enhances her in some settings but not others."

And since *mushākala*, as previously mentioned, falls under the category of semantic rhetorical embellishments, it is the mention of something using the word of something else[14]—for example, the Almighty's saying: "They forgot God, so He made them forget themselves" (*Al-Ḥashr* 19), meaning He neglected them. Here, neglect is expressed with the word *forgetting* because of its association with it.

An example from real life is told about some companions who invited a friend to drink early in the morning on a cold day. They said to him, "What would you like us to prepare for you?" He was poor and lacked warm clothing, so he wrote back:

Our companions aimed for the morning drink at its early hour,

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11- Abdul-Muta'al Al-Saeedi, The Structure of Al-Idah – A Summary of Al-Miftah in the Sciences of Rhetoric, Vol. 1, Al-Adab Library, Beirut, (n.d.), p. 18.
12- Al-Jahiz, Al-Bayan wa Al-Tabyin, edited by Abdul Salam Harun, published by Al-Khanji Press, 3rd edition, Cairo, Egypt, 1968, p. 18.
13- Issa Ali Al-Akoub, Critical Thinking Among the Arabs, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus and Dar Al-Fikr Al-Muasir, Beirut, 1st edition, 1997, p. 184.
14- Al-Sayyid Ahmad Al-Hashimi, edited and verified by Dr. Youssef Al-Sumayli, Jawahir Al-Balagha, Al-Maktabah Al-Asriya, Sidon, 2002, p. 309.

And their messenger came to me specially.

They said: Propose something and we'll cook it for you—

So, I said: Cook me a cloak and a shirt.

And like the poet who said:

Who will inform the sons of Ya'rub,

That I built the neighbor before the house.

And another who said:

Let no one act ignorantly against us,

Lest we outdo the ignorant in ignorance.

It was also said that *mushākala* is the language of resemblance, agreement, and equivalence[15], and technically, it is the mention of a thing using the word of something else due to their association. Its structure affirms a repetitive dimension, such as the poet's line:

These widows—I have fulfilled their needs,

So who will fulfill the need of this male widow?

The poet presents the structure of *mushākala* within a framework of repetitive hesitation, where the signifier is repeated on the surface but diverges in meaning at depth.

And also, in the Almighty's saying: "You know what is in myself, but I do not know what is in Yourself."

Here, *self* was used for the divine essence because it was paired with *myself*.

Mushākala may appear in speech as phonetic resemblance or phonetic-semantic resemblance, while *mukhālafah* (contrast) appears as phonetic divergence. Thus, *mushākala* ensures that the text reproduces the same phonetic and semantic image, creating the harmony that confronts existence— this is what rhetoric has defined.

A poem is thus portrayed as a homogeneous phonetic-intellectual structure, with coherent parts, each maintaining a quality standard in both form and meaning—so much so that it becomes like a single word, its beginning indistinguishable from its end, beautiful, eloquent, and majestic in diction, precise in meaning, and correct in composition.

15- Abdul Qadir Abdul Jalil, Stylistics and the Trilogy of Rhetorical Circles, Dar Safaa for Publishing and Distribution, Sultanate of Oman, 1st edition, 2002, p. 535.

On another level, the strength of syntactic relationships between the parts of a poem helps the listener anticipate the rhyme or the second hemistich of a verse before even hearing it.

This explains why this concept is considered one of the foundational principles of poetics.

2. Semantic Isotopy between Rhetoric and Style

It is not enough to express thought in words—we operate through symbols that move us by producing a stronger impact, linking denotative meanings with the present (reporting) and connotative meanings with the absent (suggestion). This is the essence of *rhetoric*, as Gérard Genette described it: **"*The soul of rhetoric lies in the awareness of a possible gap between actual language and potential language—the language of the poet and that which could be used in ordinary, simple expression. That gap, once conceived in the mind, defines the space of the image.*"**

This may explain the aesthetic reception of semantic imagery in its circulation. Since the figurative use of language creates a void that the recipient fills, it emerges from the gap between normal communicative competence and the competence of deviation. Thus, whenever we read a new text, its suggestions emerge. But how can we identify these suggestions if the reader does not introspect, trying to analyze the text through their personal experience as a reader?

This is where words deviate from their primary meanings, resulting in overlap through the multiplicity of meanings attached to a single signifier. Because the essence of a person is reflected in their language and sensitivity, style—as a revealing projection of the person's inner traits—serves as a bridge to the writer's intentions. It is the melody of the personality and a manifestation of the writer's genius. This explains the network of intersections between signifiers and meanings, and the totality of suggestive potentials in literary discourse, which represents the brilliance of both the main topic and its counterpoints. The first represents the original reality of speech, while the second represents a contingent or secondary reality. The signifiers of this secondary reality are expressed through linguistic devices like deviation and transcendence (per Paul Valéry), distortion (per Spitzer), difference (per Wellek and Warren), strangeness (per Barthes), violation of norms, and isotopy and equivalence in Arabic rhetoric.

When the violation of linguistic rules occurs within the domains of syntax, non-syntax, or rejected forms, the second (non-syntax) reflects the language's flexibility in areas where humans seek to express themselves freely. Since stylistics is born from and inherits rhetoric, it sometimes narrows down to become merely part of the rhetorical communication model. At other times, it separates and

expands to represent all of rhetoric, in its condensed form. This explains why rhetoric is often considered a method for textual interpretation.

Talking about the concept of isotopy—or mushākala—necessitates establishing a relationship between rhetoric and stylistics. As we've seen, mushākala means mentioning a thing using the word of something else due to its association. This associative occurrence causes the word to resemble another, diverging from its original meaning during proximity with the mentioned "other." It may not qualify as either literal or metaphorical. It's not literal because the word wasn't used in its original sense, as seen in the verse: *"The recompense of an evil deed is an evil deed like it."* (*Yusuf*, 27).

Here, the second "evil" refers to punishment and is called "evil" due to its association with the first.

It is not metaphor either, as it involves mentioning the accompanying thing using the word of another due to companionship. Mushākala deviates from the word indicating the intended meaning to another without conceptual proximity or semantic analogy. This deviation (inziyāḥ) leads to a new meaning that only exists in this specific usage—two words with two meanings and two cues: one for the literal, the other for the figurative. The essential requirement is that of accompaniment, distinguishing it from synonymy.

It may involve two words with opposite meanings, or words connected by appropriateness, and occurs only when permissible. It marks a transition from literal meanings to metaphorical ones based on similarity—the second meaning being determined through its association with the first.

This aligns with what stylistics emphasizes: deviation, departure, transgression, fusion, or poetic devices through the sequencing and arrangement of sounds—what is often termed wordplay or language play. It involves exploiting linguistic resources to stretch meaning beyond dictionary bounds, as internal relationships between word combinations reshape semantic boundaries.

This suggestive broadcasting (i.e., connotation) points to multi-layered meanings. Hence, if we aim to direct the relationship between rhetoric and stylistics toward achieving textual uniqueness, we find that the text contains a pragmatic component that allows for analyzing the variations produced by the model of deviation in a novel way.

3. The Rhetorical Image and Linguistic Levels

"The rhetorical image is the linguistic unit that constitutes a deviation, thus making the art of expression a system of linguistic deviations." According to Charles W. Morris's model, we can distinguish between three types of deviation:

- − Syntactic deviation – the relationship between signs.

- − Pragmatic deviation – the relationship between the sign, the sender, and the receiver.

- − Semantic deviation – the relationship between the sign and reality.

Deviation is based on reinforcing the organization of the standard language (parallelism, equivalence), or by moderately violating it. This image can be of two natures: it is either a violation of the syntactic norm or a narrowing of it. The first was exemplified by metaphor, and the second by equivalences (such as parallelism). This is what makes rhetorical images become (semio-) semantic images, as the first is a model, the second communicative, and the third a model of reality. The first includes two parts: linguistic operations and linguistic levels, as follows:

Linguistic Operations	That Violate the Rules				That Reinforce the Rules
	Addition	Omission	Substitution	Permutation	Equivalence

As for:

Linguistic Levels	Phonological	Morphological	Syntactic	Semantic	Linear (Graphological)	Textual

It is worth noting that "equivalence": is the accumulation of a certain level among the three levels of discourse, which is called similarity, and it has the connotation of repetition, insistence, reiteration, and rotation in terms of syntactic function, through its inclusion of variation and recurrence. This is what defines equivalence, and the table clarifies the different semantic possibilities used.

From the level related to sound, there are images of phonetic licenses, such as tonal (rhythmic) images formed by interactions including gender, location (beading, paronomasia), and repetition (repetition of phonemes), similarity (partial equivalence through addition)... As for morphological equivalence, it is concerned with the site of word repetition that plays a role in the rhetorical image, which in turn produces phonetic and linear similarity. As for the syntactic-semantic images, the first is portrayed as a parallel that appears as a highly diverse repetitive image, and in the second, semantically similar linguistic units are combined, including substitution (metaphors). Equivalence

also appears at the level of linear images in prosodic balance, in textual images, and pragmatic images, considering them as deviation in comparison to the standard of linguistic communication. The rhetorical image, in its excess, deviation, and equivalence, transforms into a poetic image, because linguistic deviation is treated as a rhetorical image, thus achieving the poetic nature of the text by producing its emotional and aesthetic effect. This aligns with the concept of semantic similarity as an active element in transforming the text from its apparent form to the suggestive form in order to achieve semantic diversity in the weaving of the poetic effect.

4. The concept of isotopy in Western studies:

In addition to the Arabic roots of this concept, as it expresses resemblance, the concept of isotopy (L'isotopie) has been employed in anthropology, linguistics, and psychology to obtain information about the deep characteristics of a particular conceptual field in order to establish difference and similarity between cultures and to search for the cognitive structures underlying the lexical systems of a society. Greimas (A.J. Greimas) is considered the first to borrow from physics-chemistry the element of semantic isotopy to use it in discourse analysis, considering it a new field for actual application distinguished by procedural characteristics. The concept of isotopy refers to reiteration and repetition.

"Transferring this concept to the field of human sciences from the domain of experimental sciences made it occupy, since that time, a central position within the structural semiotic trend. Like any new concept, those interested received it with discussion and scrutiny, but it was not rejected; rather, they accepted its validity as a procedural concept for discourse analysis in its light."

The concept concerns similar chemical elements, which differ only in their contact with their nuclei, which illustrates the theoretical convergence between the use of the concept in the field of chemistry and its use in the field of semantics, where the focus is on verbal similarities between words belonging to the same system, despite their structural differences due to the variation in the internal processes presented by each word individually. It is worth noting that chemical similarity concerns essence, while in the linguistic or semiotic field, similarity refers to the contact that brings together the words of discourse within a single semantic framework achieved by coherence.

4.1 Isotopy according to Greimas (A.J. Greimas):

"It is an accumulated set of semantic categories (components) that make possible an isotopic reading of the story as it results from a partial reading of the utterances, after resolving an ambiguity — this very resolution is blended with the search for a coherent reading."

Greimas limited it to content isotopy, and in this definition, there are three issues that determine the specificity of the concept:

− Isotopy is a set of semantic components.

− Isotopy is limited to the story.

− It resolves the ambiguity of sub-isotopies by finding a coherent reading that unifies them.

What Greimas means by semantic categories is the isotopic analysis based on meaning and content, excluding form and expression, and what each carries of rhythm, syntax, and morphology. As for the limitation of isotopy to the story, we believe that Greimas did not intend restriction, but rather referred to the various features that characterize the story, which made it a tightly woven isotopic system. This model reveals isotopies clearly, which is what Greimas aimed at.

He said about it: "The meaning of the story lies entirely in its semantic structure," which derives its origins from the narrative units in the text, in the form of intertwined logical relations, and is the result of the differences and shifts occurring at the heart of the discourse as perceived in its entirety, and reconstructed by identifying qualitative differences so that its characteristics may be defined. These are represented in a set of minor semantic units he calls "sèmes," where a single sème cannot ever be defined unless it is in a conflicting function with a different sème. The total number of sèmes is what produces the sémèmes, or as he expresses it: types of meaning.

Then the process of isotopy and the recurrence of sèmes is what allows the extraction of isotopy (Isotopie), or as some call it, the semantic pole, which refers to a category or a network of linguistic categories that extends throughout the discourse process. This cannot be expressed unless we accept the group of sentences that constitute it—not merely the successive, independent sentences, but rather those sharing a common isotopy (Isotopie). Also, cohesion is the mechanism that ensures the coherence of the discourse or a given message. It can be defined as the common level that enables this coherence to be achieved, since the linking of a sème to others is accomplished through the "classème," as communication throughout the discourse forms a networked path that guarantees sentence cohesion.

What is meant by the common level is the collection of sèmes that achieve isotopy as sèmes and their unity, because they ensure the description of the discursive sentence that realizes the intersection of two semantic units, thereby producing partial meanings for each lexeme separately in the form of a comprehensive reading of a specific text. It can be said that a single lexeme can be divided into

multiple sememes, and each sememe in turn is divided into multiple sèmes (i.e., sème1, sème2, sème3... sème n). In addition, the meaning of the lexeme is completed through its adjacency to a number of other lexemes and the unification of some sèmes, and the dominance of a specific sémic unit in the discourse forms a shared classème that achieves a coherent semantic discourse. Each classème splits and includes several lexemes, and each lexeme is composed of a nuclear sème, i.e., sème1, sème2, sème3... sème n, while a second lexeme, in turn, has a different nuclear sème: sème3, sème4, sème5... sème n.

Thus, we reach the sème that represents the classème (or contextual sème), which corresponds to the Greimasian view in defining the concept of isotopy as a procedure for discourse analysis. The existence of such nuclear and contextual sèmes implies the existence of two types of isotopy in the form of two kinds of cohesion.

The transition from the signifier to the signified, which refers us to a linguistic sign in a later stage, alters the nature of the relationship, so that semantic isotopy at a second stage becomes a semantic sign or indicator, forming thereby a semiological isotopy.

Since semantic isotopy contributes to clarifying the meaning of the produced utterance and achieves the coherence of parts of the discourse through the contextual sèmes, which are the unity of the classème, the semiological isotopy is achieved through the nuclear sèmes.

Each lexeme contains a semantic nucleus, whose function is to bring classimes closer together, such as metaphors and wordplay. This constitutes the second reading at the level of meaning, since semiological isotopy is what achieves coherence within the parts of discourse, where the signifier turns into a signified and then into a semiotic relation.

For example, in the application aspect, it can be said that semantic isotopy specializes at an advanced stage in the features of signifieds at the level of meaning, as semiological isotopy is what achieves coherence in the process of discourse, where the signifier turns into a signified and then into a semiotic relationship.

For example, in the application aspect, it can be said that semantic isotopy specializes at an advanced stage in the general features of signifieds at the level of form, whereas semiotic isotopy goes beyond it to the level of analytical, not merely descriptive reading, thus yielding a generative reading of meaning and interpretation.

Moreover, Greimas points to a third type, which is syntactic coherence, through the distribution of units. For example, at the syntactic level, one cannot find a grammatical function for a given word unless its subject is determined within a specific structure — that is, in relation to the words preceding and following it — to know its grammatical position. This is what allows for the study of syntactic isotopy in poetic instances, which are produced by the deviations occurring at that level.

Greimas also defines isotopy as the set of recurring semantic categories that clearly ensure the reading of narrative based on the partial decisions of utterances.

This leads us to understand that all the categories specific to discourse, when repeated, contribute to clarifying the produced utterance. The narrative, being more inclusive of these components, results from partial decisions of utterances, which explains why isotopy is a contextual seme, and what is repeated is the classime within the text.

There are those who adopt the concept of isotopy from Greimas using the term "Isotopie." Jean Cohen applies it to the total interactions that confirm the semantic unity of the text. He calls them "affective isotopies" — referring to the model of homogeneity that governs the poetic text and shapes its poetic quality. He defines it, borrowing from Greimas, as "the total set of semantic layers that make the stereotypical reading of the narrative possible." He adds, "The structure that combines two semantic images can be considered the minimum context that allows for the establishment of isotopies." In Cohen's view, isotopies seek the possible, not the inevitable. Since opposites are assumed to belong to the same layers, the resemblance in this case governs the presumed features, not the proposed ones. He defined the similarity between the signifier, the signified, and the sign as a feature of this process. The general meaning according to Greimas is that isotopy is "any repetition (Itération) of linguistic units."

He focused on semantic isotopy and the repetition of syntactic structures for the same seme or group of semes, and the relation that reveals to us the identity of repetitions of semes or the seme group in equivalence relations among the semes it contains. Both poetry and literature (prose) play an important role in renewing the ambiguity in isotopy. Textual, literary, advertising, and narrative isotopies offer an isotopic function at an original level in the semantic cohesion (Cohésion) of all utterances.

As for his study of the surface structure, it addresses two aspects: the narrative component and the discursive component. Through analyzing the narrative component, it presents on its surface a number of living or non-living beings (gradually acquiring a set of components, each called a

sémème). These differ in terms of function: the first are considered discrete units (unités discrètes), organized in describing the actants, and the second are subordinate to and integrated with them (intégrés), and are called predicates (prédicat).

On the other hand, in the deep structure, the length of the expressive chain of the classime ensures the consistency of the uttered discourse. Based on this characteristic, it becomes clear that gathering at least two semiotic images can be considered a context — at the very least allowing the inclusion of isotopy into a semiotic category that brings together two opposing (contradictory) terms. The four elements of the semiotic square (carré sémiotique) lead us to semantic isotopy.

Meanwhile, we find that he distinguished between types of isotopies, such as classificatory isotopies (Isotopie Classimatique), which consist of repeated semantic units of seme paragraphs; sememic isotopies (Isotopie sémimique) or horizontal isotopies (Isotopie horizontal), in which the seme shares with its nuclear forms. But other semes, which are linked together by simple logical relationships, also include metaphorical isotopies (Isotopie métaphorique) or vertical isotopies (Isotopie verticales). This explains the structural multiplicity of the text, through processes of representation that contribute to textual cohesion and coherence. The function of isotopy is to focus on the referential effect through other sub-isotopies organized by functional linguistic systems (such as congruence and similarity). This is according to Greimas — but how did this concept develop with others, especially his students? And what are the common characteristics defined by Greimas for analyzing discourse according to this procedural concept?

4.2 Isotopy according to François Rastier and others:

Rastier, following Greimas, had a set of views that sometimes aligned with Greimas's propositions and differed in others. He rejected the notion that discursive structures are pre-defined as different from linguistic structures. These structures include stylistic rhetoric, as he studied isotopies and extended this concept to include both expression and content, making it as diverse as the components of discourse. There is prosodic, rhythmic, logical, and semantic isotopy, etc.

The mechanism of isotopy, according to Rastier, is not based on the micro-level speech chain but is determined through the entirety of the text in a coherence that genuinely specifies the type of seme intended by the speech. Isotopy is not defined by the sentence in its proposition, duplication, or even its sequence and succession. It may go beyond that to the text itself. However, current speech can be understood at the level of natural, direct sentences, as reducing the number of possible meanings of speech facilitates the grasping of a single meaning.

Returning to discourses with fully complex connotative levels makes it difficult for the reader to understand their meaning due to the lack of unity among contextual semes and the branching and divergence of semantic categories, which hampers the reading of some contemporary poetic texts. This is referred to as "non-sense" (Non Sens), not ambiguity (Ambiguïté), because the latter — unlike the former — is defined as a multiplicity of meanings, nothing else.

Rastier proposed a suggestion in an attempt to resolve this issue, where he viewed the coherence of any text as linked to its internal semantic relations, because its consistency is tied to its relationship with the external — linguistic — environment, seen as a set of semiotic phenomena associated with it. Therefore, coherence falls under the intra-linguistic level (Intralinguistique), while the second belongs to the inter-semiotic level (Intersémiotique).

Isotopy, in Greimas's framework, is confined to the intra-linguistic level, and there is no place for the concept of coherence within the Greimasian approach, as it goes beyond the immanent level. Since the coherence of speech is only achieved through its harmony with what it refers to — taking into account intentionality and reference, which can be considered one — isotopic consistencies (or coherence) exist in themselves, but in their relation to semiological isotopies. Rastier divides the latter into two types: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal isotopies represent the set of nuclear semes for each seme that belongs to a speech chain, or the set of shared semiotic images among its elements. As for vertical isotopy, it connects the set of semes belonging to different semantic fields. This supports the Greimasian proposition concerning these types.

These isotopies must be articulated among themselves through metaphorical isotopies (métaphoriques). This means that isotopy does not become evident through a single isotopy but through the internal interconnection of all isotopies of various kinds, whether they are phonetic, syntactic, or lexical.

The univocal reading that seeks to reach a meaning through each text is based on the presence of a single isotopy, as if the meaning of the text is the text of the text, or the descriptive text—that is, on a single isotopy of the text—without paying attention to the structural conditions for producing meaning.

This represents an interpretive technique based on reduction, as it subjects the multi-isotopic text to "the control of a single field of meaning," because the isotopy, which in the view of Fontanille combines the concepts of coherence and cohesion, is based on them as different ways of gathering parts into a single whole.

Isotopy offers a single form for these groupings, where each part is a shared element in the production of the whole, without considering the second aspect of meaning production, which is absence. Because a figure in truth is both presence and absence—relative to a historical reality, or to something already known and written in advance—it remains separate from language, which does not possess an ideological nature except in the usage applied to it.

As for Pottier, he borrowed from Greimas's terminological dictionary the terms *sème* and *classème*. Pottier sees that the essence of the meaning of a given sign consists of a set of distinctive semantic features. At the lowest level of the sign, i.e., the morpheme level, the sum of those features is called the *sémème*, and each individual feature is termed a *sème*.

Sémème = (sème 1, sème 2, sème 3… sème n).

The nature of the *sèmes* varies. Some are denotative, defining the meaning of the sign in a stable way with a social base, and others are connotative, representing characteristics and qualities unique to the sign itself.

Pottier divides the denotative *sèmes* into:

– Specific semes, which distinguish between two closely related words in meaning.

– Generic semes, which are considered general classifications.

The definition Pottier gives to the concept of the *sème* corresponds to Greimas's *classeme*. For him, the *sémème* alone belongs to the content level, and he defines it as a set of meaning investments of the morpheme. Both share a focus on meaning, where the relation between part and whole forms a connection with specific distinguishing features called *sèmes*, which can only be determined within the whole. The context determines the meaning of the *classeme*, and this defines isotopy as connected to the linguistic value concept.

In his book *General Linguistics* (1974), Pottier identified the three relational components that represent the internal system of any natural language, opening the way for three immanent modes: the semantic mode, the syntactic mode, and the pragmatic mode. All these terms fall within the linguistic level, as opposed to the content level.

He compares the content level and the linguistic level, just as Greimas does in comparing the semiological level and the semantic level within the two axes of immanence and manifestation, which form the semiotic space according to the following diagram:

…

The literary text has always been associated with the concept of double meaning, where analytical studies limit the multiplicity of meanings, which ultimately leads to the acknowledgment of a single meaning: the literary, connotative meaning, as it is preferred to be called by linguistic studies from the perspective of the level of language: denotative and connotative.

The duality of meaning, in both its denotative and connotative aspects, addresses meaning as a secondary meaning, while the interpretive perspective acknowledges the multiplicity of sign meanings and the ambiguity of sentences, and thus, texts can be interpreted in several meanings. This is a fundamental phenomenon in the semantics of natural languages. Because meaning is not presented directly, even in the case of the simplest utterance, as the meaning in it is the result of a complex interpretive process achieved by parts of the utterance itself. While the types of utterances differ in the degree of complexity of these paths, they all share in them.

The issue of meanings within literary texts raises the concept of *isotopy*—comprehensive or dominant isotopy—which represents a point of semiotic divergence that seeks to define the nature of the mechanism's operation. However, the interpretive perspective has tried to mitigate the complexity of this issue by linking the concept of dominant isotopy to the development of the interpretive process within any spoken passage that represents a text, relying on the mechanism of meaning growth and its gradual and linear development within speech chains.

Rasitier suggests moving beyond the analytical mechanism that examines deep semantic structures in contrast to surface semantic structures, and instead proposes two mechanisms, which are as follows:

- **Inner Interpretation**: This mechanism focuses on the *sèmes* (either inherent or related) that emerge within the text, without the social standards that participate in the functional system of language when interpreting and defining some *sèmes*. These are added to the pragmatic conditions.

- **Outer Interpretation**: This mechanism concerns the content that is not updated within the interpreted text. Outer interpretation requires prior inner interpretation, where descriptive reading is the reading that relies on inner interpretation, while the productive reading represents the analytical mechanism that uses, even partially, outer interpretation.

…

Descriptive reading can become the subject of a series of productive readings, and these latter readings can interpret others. All readings can be treated as texts that are subject to analysis.

The relationship between them is the nature of the relationship between the source text and the target text. In the first case (descriptive), the qualitative isotopy of the target text is contained within the source text itself, while in the productive reading, it may contain a specific and unique isotopy, as Rasitier illustrated.

…

What Rasitier presents is evidence of the necessity of extra-textual information for the mechanism of internal interpretation, as it allows for the analysis of at least one semantic component within the text. If this component is a concomitant seme, the use of that information will be necessary, while its use will be beneficial in the case of a related seme.

It is true that extra-textual information or knowledge ensures the completion of both internal and external interpretations, but it is possible "for one piece of information to dominate, depending on the criterion that governs the interpretation process," whether it is social or individual. The criteria derived from this are the internal social criteria and the external individual criteria, which share with the functional system of language in ensuring internal interpretation and transitioning it to external interpretation, according to Rasitier.

…

This diagram is merely a model, concerned only with the semantic component of interpretive adequacy. Moreover, the criteria that represent encyclopedic knowledge are not limited to filling the gaps of the immediate reading, but rather facilitate the medium that enables the creation of a relationship between the two texts, which is encompassed by the mechanism of intertextuality, a form of semiotic alignment.

4.3 Semantic Alignment According to Michel Adam (J. Michel Adam)

Michel Adam attempted to address the issue of the linguistic approach to literary texts, starting from the concepts of denotation and suggestion, considering the relationship between the latter and the individual performance of language (style).

This issue was touched upon by Kratzer, who defines style as: "the individual solution proposed to the problems and difficulties encountered in any construction or syntactic work, and the individual

solution involves the presence of an active subject (the author), with a stable, fixed pronoun being the source of these texts."

He raised a fundamental issue, which consists of transitioning from a system of high meaning to a system of signs, i.e., moving from the form of expression or communication, which pertains to the linguistic sign, to a system of communication created by discourse. Furthermore, the languages of suggestion in secondary systems are compared to declarative systems and appear at the same time on four levels:

- At the level of non-linguistic semantic material, which is represented in the semiotic field that allows the identification of the location or position of the suggestion.

- At the level of non-linguistic auditory material: Represented by producing intonation or phonemes that reveal the speaker's identity.

- At the level of the linguistic form of the content: In this case, suggestion takes a syntactic direction.

- At the level of the linguistic form of expression, which refers to the speech situations that can be adopted.

Thus, he formulated the equation of suggestion as follows:

…

On the other hand, Barthes defined in the semiotics of meaning the two elements of report and suggestion according to the semiotic system that contains the expression diagram and another for the content, with a meaning corresponding to the relationship between the two diagrams. If we assume that this first system (expression + relationship, content) has itself become two elements of a second system that extends from it, we face two systems that overlap with each other while also separating at the same time, according to two methods.

…

The first system: the level of report, the second system: the level of suggestion. The suggestive system consists of an expressive level from a signifying system, the spoken language, its first system.

As for the second method, it is as follows:

…

The first system: it does not become a scheme in expression, but rather a scheme for content or a signification of the second system. Since the language of literary discourse tends towards suggestion, in its transcendence and its surpassing, Michel defined the concept of *matching* within the mimicry of texts, which confirms the notion that suggestion opens the text to a network, or a series of diverse texts.

The concept of semantic matching affirms the connected explosions and the associated speech homogeneity of discourse, and the linearity of reading. Hence, the homogeneity of the text has been breached, and the emergence of a new meaning does not leave the declarative evidence in speech nor the speaking subject; it disrupts them both[16].

It can be said that Michel's perspective closely aligns with Greimas's view.

Conclusion:

Semantic matching is a mechanism through which the aesthetic dimensions of contemporary poetry are diversified. It addresses rhetorical structures, namely the discourse organization (related to content), and the multiple stylistic levels, thus determining the rhetorical images and semantic dimensions contributing to the interpretation of the poetic text. The goal is to form another space for the poetic experience, as it chases after both the aesthetic and emotional values.

From the theoretical level, the French school has been able to define the specificity of this concept, matching, with Greimas at the forefront. He concluded that the signifier and the signified (linguistic sign) can transform into a semiotic sign. He identified a semantic matching, which is any matching that occurs through contextual semiotic features, meaning it is based fundamentally on the unity of the *klasime*. Semantic matching is responsible for the harmony of the parts of discourse and helps clarify the meaning of the produced utterance. On the other hand, semiotic matching is any coherence achieved by the nuclear features, as each lexeme contains a semiotic core, including metaphors, wordplay, and others.

Since the structural enumeration of the text involves representation processes contributing to textual cohesion and interconnection, the function of matching is concerned with the referential impact through other sub-matches, organized by the functional systems of language. Rastier does not limit himself to the analytical mechanism that probes deep semantic structures in contrast to surface

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16- Abdul Qadir Abdul Jalil, Op. cit, p. 100.

semantic structures through interpretation, but also introduces the mechanism of *intertextuality* as a form of matching.

As this concept is a substantial one, it affects meaning in its various manifestations and reveals its internal relationships at its deep level. This is why Michel Adam discusses the significance of content through the duality of report and suggestion. He focuses on the work of meaning through the knowledge of the foreign guide, as it manifests in the form of a constellation of stars, representing multiple meanings. Within this constellation, we can distinguish a fixed, unchanging element, represented by the signifying core, and another variable element, formed by the contextual significations, which together define the concept of meaning and its impact.

Arab studies have adopted some of these operational concepts in applications related to narrative and poetry.