

“VERBS OF SURVIVAL” IN SUZANNE COLLINS’S *THE HUNGER GAMES*

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Abstract. Makalah ini membahas studi medan makna tentang verba dan frasa verba yang menunjukkan hubungan makna dengan konsep ‘survival’ dan tipe-tipe hubungan semantis yang dinyatakannya. Studi ini didasarkan atas klasifikasi oleh Kreidler (1998) dan Kennedy (2003), yang membagi tipe-tipe hubungan makna menjadi empat: hiponim, sinonim, antonim, dan kolokasi. Penelitian kualitatif deskriptif ini menggunakan 77 data dengan acuan kata kunci ‘survival’ yang juga adalah tema dari novel oleh Suzanne Collin berjudul *The Hunger Games*. Dari hasil penelitian ditemukan 34 hiponim, 13 sinonim, 21 antonim, dan 14 kolokasi. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa tema novel yaitu ‘survival’ dinyatakan dalam berbagai verba dan frasa verba dengan berbagai tipe hubungan makna dengan kata kunci.

Keywords: *semantic field analysis, types of semantic relations, verbs of survival*

INTRODUCTION

Appreciating literary works include not just identifying the theme, but also recognizing how words in the literary works are used and organized to achieve the author’s purpose to send a certain message. In linguistic analysis, particularly semantics, one approach to the examination of the relations of words in texts is lexical field analysis. Since a literary work is a kind of text, it is possible to use lexical field analysis to support the study of the language elements of the literary works.

Lexical field was heavily influenced by de Saussure’s structuralism and German idealism that origins of idea of Humboldt and Herder in the mid of 19th century (Semantic Field, Semantic Domain.pdf, December, 26, 2013). According Kreidler (1998: 87), “lexical field is an attempt to classify lexemes according to shared and differentiating features.” It means that the words that are used in the same sentence are similar to each other or are somewhat recurring. This means that there are just similar things. In other words, a lexical field is the set of lexemes (vocabulary units, units of meaning) in any

one language-system which cover conceptual area and, by means of the relations of sense which hold between them, give structure to it.

Lexical field analysis describes the types of relations that exist among lexical items or words. According to Kreidler (1996:87), Some lexical sets involve part-whole relationships, for example, *arm* includes *hand*, which then include *finger* and *thumb*. On the other hand, the set *second-minu* also a part-whole relationship that is also hierarchical. And some sets are sequential, such as numbers (*one, two, three, etc.*) or cyclical as in months (*January, February, etc.*), days (*Sunday, Monday, etc.*) and seasons (*spring, summer, autumn, winter*). Lexical field theory generally identified a number of lexical relations, including hyponymy, synonymy, antonymy, and collocation (Kreidler, 1996: 87). In lexical field theory, there are kinds of lexical relations as hyponymy, synonymy, antonymy, and collocation. Lexical field (also known as semantic field) involves identifying and classifying words from the same area of meaning (Language Terminology Checklist Article).

Hyponymy is the relationship between

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some words to other words, that is, these words are analogues. To support this, Saeed (2003: 68) states, “Hyponymy is a relation of inclusion. A hyponym includes the meaning of a more general word.” The more general word is called the *superordinate* and *hypernym*. Much of the vocabulary is linked by such system of inclusion.

Synonyms are two or more words of the same meaning. Synonymy relations means that the words belong to the same part of speech. These words possess one or more identical meaning, interchangeable at least in some contexts without any considerable alteration in denotational meaning, but they may differ in morphemic composition, phonemic shape, shades of meaning, connotation, affective value, style, emotional coloring and valence peculiar to one of the elements in a synonymic group. (*Synonymy In English.pdf*, December, 28, 2013). Kennedy (2003:68) said that words that show similar meanings are known as **synonyms**. Kennedy further states that there can never be pure synonyms, because “words never have exactly the same context of use, differing for example in levels of formality” (*Ibid.*). However, he continued that for general language teaching purposes, it is often convenient to recognise approximate similarity of meaning, and to accept, for example, that *enough*, *sufficient* and *adequate* mean roughly the same, as do *say again* and *repeat*, or *pull towards* and *drag*. Also, in translation between languages, loose synonymy between word forms is possible. Another function of synonyms is for avoiding repetition, and thus contributes to cohesion in texts (Kennedy, 2003:68).

If the synonyms are two or more words of the same meaning, the antonyms are opposite in meaning, and when they occur as predicates of the same subject the predications are contradictory. In terminology, antonyms are words which are opposite in meaning. It is useful, however, to identify several different types of relationship

under a more general label of opposition such as *wet—dry*, *late—on time*, *same—different*, *more—less*, *kind—unkind* and *direct—indirect*. Also, antonyms that are generated by prefixes such as *un-*, *in-*, *im-*, *il-*, *ir-* are a rich source of vocabulary in English (Kennedy, 2003: 69). When discussing antonymy, the principal distinction we have to make is between gradable and non-gradable antonyms. Non-gradable antonyms are antonyms which do not admit a midpoint, such as *male-female* or *pass-fail*. Gradable antonyms, however, like *hot-cold* or *good-bad*, seem to be more common than nongradable ones. A gradable pair of antonyms names points on a scale which contains a midpoint: thus, *hot* and *cold* are two points towards different ends of a scale which has a midpoint, lexicalized by adjectives like *tepid*, which is used to refer to the temperature of liquids which are neither hot nor cold, but somewhere in between. A consequence of the fact that gradable antonyms occur on a scale is the fact that they are open to comparison. Thus, we may say that one drink is hotter than another, or that some water is less cold than another (Riemer, 2010:137).

Lexical cohesion is also achieved through the selection of vocabulary. According to Kennedy (2003: 322), “Particular words can become associated with or regularly found in the company of certain other words. Cohesion that is achieved through the association of lexical items regularly occurring together is called collocation.” Collocates can be words that belong to the same area of meaning, or words that are frequently used in the same contexts, e.g. *weather forecast*, *full moon*, *heavy rain*. In a *trial*, if the *jury* cannot agree on a *verdict* then we say there is a *hung jury* and the *judge* may order a *retrial*. There has been an increasing tendency for such outcomes in *criminal cases* (Kennedy, 2003: 322). Collocations are usually described as “sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur [i.e.

occur together]" (Cruse 1986:40). The term collocation means lexical meaning "at the syntagmatic level" (Firth 1957:196). The collocation analysis is important in identifying how the main concept is expanded and elaborated by combining the main keyword, *survival*, with other words that are commonly used together with the keyword.

The present study adopts semantic field approach to analyze language aspects of a concept or theme of a literary work. The work is a novel by Suzanne Collins entitled *The Hunger Games* (2009). Specifically, the study focuses on the verbs expressing the concept of *survival*. In other words, the focus of this study is verbs of survival. Here, *survival* is taken as the keyword because it is the theme of the novel. This study aims to analyze the verbs and the verb phrases that show some relations to the meaning of the word ‘*survival*’.

The concept *survival* means “the act or living or continuing longer than another person or thing. Or, the continuation of life or existence” (*Merriam Webster* online dictionary). The motives of someone to survive may to struggle to get a better life or may to fight against the opponent and may to run away from dangerous thing or to live or exist especially in spite of difficult conditions. For example, the verbs that associated with survival concepts include *struggle*, *survive*, or *alive* for the synonyms, and *died*, *pain*, or *suffocate* for antonyms.

The focus of the study is the verb and the verb phrase expression that are related to word ‘*survival*’ which is taken from the novel which created by Suzanne Collins entitled *The Hunger Games* (2009). The story is telling about a girl named Katniss Everdeen, a girl from District 12, who had been a tribute in some game and she must survive until the game is over. The problems are formulated as follows: (1) What verbs and verb phrases are associated with the concept of ‘*survival*’ in Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games*? (2)

What is the relation between the verbs and verb phrases with the concept of ‘*survival*’ in Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games*? This study may give a contribution to the readers who are interested in studies of linguistics in that they may understand the verbs and verb phrases that are associated with the concept of ‘*survival*’ and the types of lexical relation between the words and the concept of ‘*survival*’ in Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games*.

METHOD

This descriptive qualitative study aims to interpret the collected data that are taken from Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games*. Here, the data are described in narrative form to provide more comprehensive understanding of the topics. It also aims to describe and explain the features of the phenomena that are observed from the data. Since the focus is the verbs and verb phrases that are associated and related with the concept of *survival* in Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games*, a qualitative study is appropriate because the aims to identify the lexical items that are related to the concept of *survival*, and explain the kinds of semantic relations between the lexical items and the keyword *survival*. The study involves seventy-seven (77) sentences, and forty-one (41) verbs and verb phrases.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are presented and discussed in the following sections, based on the four types of semantic relations identified in the data: hyponymy, synonymy, antonymy and collocation.

1. HYPONYMY

Many words can be described as being semantically subordinate or superordinate to other words. A word that is subordinate to another in this way is called a hyponym. There are thirty-four (34) data indicating hyponymy

relations with the topic ‘*survive*’ that are found in the novel. These verbs are: *grapple, attack, protect, hidden, fight, guarded, competing, hunting, shot, scramble, flee, extinguished, avoid, dodge, cover, face, treat, recovering, heal, escape, and feed*. And the verbs are: *Do my best, staying power, protect me, rest and drink water, he did save my life, stole the food, make camp for the night, hobbling as fast as he can, waiting to fire, Peeta’s clawing at Cato’s arm, and use his body as a weapon against me*. Some of the data analysis are presented below for illustration.

- (1) *Grapple*: A boy, I think from District 9, reaches the pack at the same time I do and for a brief time we **grapple** for it and then he coughs, splattering my face with blood (4:150:18).

Literally, or in dictionary meaning, the verb *grapple* means ‘(1) to struggle with somebody in a close hand-to-hand fight, (2) to struggle to deal with something, (3) to grab hold of somebody or (4) to hold something with hooked device’ (Microsoft Encarta Dictionary, 2007). In the present data, it seems that the verb is closer in meaning with the first meaning ‘(1) to struggle with somebody in a close hand-to-hand fight.’ The narrator (*I*) seems to struggle with a boy for the pack that each of them has to get. Here, the verb *grapple* is a specific kind of action that tells more specifically what the characters in the novel have to do to survive the game. In this case, the semantic relation between the verb *grapple* and *survival* is hyponymy, in that *survival* is the superordinate and *grapple* is the hyponym.

- (2) *protect*: I can hear the blade whistling toward me and reflexively hike the pack up to **protect** my head.(6:151:4)

In dictionary meaning, the verb *protect* means ‘(1) to cover or shield from exposure, injury, damage, or destruction, (2) to maintain the status or integrity, (3) to defend (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate). From the present data, it seems that the verb is closer with the first meaning ‘(1) to cover or shield from exposure, injury, damage, or destruction.’ From the sentence of the novel seems that the narrator was reflexively to avoided the blade which whistling toward her to protect her head. Here, the verb *protect* is a specific kind of action that tells more specifically what the characters in the novel have to do to survive the game. In this discussion, the semantic relation between the verb *protect* and *survival* is hyponymy. In that *survival* is the superordinate and *protect* is the hyponym.

- (3) *fight*: That way they’ll guarantee drawing us in to **fight**.(15:154:17)

In dictionary meaning, the verb *fight* means ‘(1) to contend in battle or physical combat; *especially* : to strive to overcome a person by blows or weapons, (2) to put forth a determined effort, (3) to struggle to endure or surmount, (4) to manage (a ship or plane) in a battle or storm (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate). From the present data, it seems that the verb is closer with the first meaning ‘(1) to contend in battle or physical combat; *especially* : to strive to overcome a person by blows or weapons.’ From the sentence of the novel seems that the narrator and the other tributes (us) are fighting to beat each other. So, the verb *fight* is a specific kind of action that tells more specifically what the characters in the novel have to do to survive the game. In this case, the semantic relation between the verb *fight* and *survival* is hyponymy. In that *survival* is the superordinate and *fight* is the hyponym.

- (4) (*he*) *did save my life*: **He did save my life** by taking on Cato after all. (66: 316: 3)

In dictionary meaning, the verb *save* means ‘rescue somebody or something: to rescue somebody or something from harm or danger’ (Microsoft Encarta Dictionary, 2009). It is clear that the verb phrase from the sentence is the hyponymy of the *survival* concept, because from the sentence, the narrator (I) stay alive because her teammate had save her life from attack of their opponent.

(5) *hobbling as fast as he can*: He’s about fifteen yards behind me, **hobbling as fast as he can**, but the mutts are closing in on him fast. (69: 331: 14)

Hobbling is the present participle of the verb *hobble* means ‘restrict somebody’s actions: to put restrictions on somebody or something to slow or prevent progress’ or ‘limp along: to walk haltingly and unsteadily, taking short steps’ (Microsoft Encarta Dictionary, 2009). From the sentence, the verb phrase *hobbling as fast as he can* mean that the character was an injury, but he must be survive till the end of the Game, so the character do some violent efforts to run in limp condition and to stay alive. Here, that verb phrase is the hyponymy of the *survival* concept.

2. SYNONYMY

The analysis of the verbs and verb phrases that show synonymy relation with the the keyword *survival* results in thirteen (13) verbs and verb phrases are *sprint*, *run*, *struggle*, *defend*, *survived*, *hurdle*, *keep moving*, *get back behind the fire line*, *drag myself into a tree*, *manage to sit up*, *surviving*, *manage to ignore the thought*, *gather courage*, *would live*, and *stay alive*. Some data analysis are presented for illustration.

(6) *sprint* and *beat*: I can *sprint* faster than any of the girls in our school although a couple can *beat* me in distance races (2:149:11).

Literally, the intransitive verb *sprint* means ‘go at top speed: to run, swim, or cycle as rapidly as possible’ (Microsoft Encarta, 2007). On the other hand, the idea of *survival* includes the ‘fact of remaining alive or in existence, especially after facing life-threatening danger, or of continuing in a present position or office’ (*Ibid.*). It is clear that the verb *sprint* carries the meaning of an action that is taken in order to win the race and survive the game.

(7) *struggle*: I lost my bread during the **struggle** with the boy from District 9 but managed to stuff my plastic in my sleeve so as I walk I fold it neatly and tuck it into a pocket. (9:151: 19)

Literally, the intransitive verb *struggle* means ‘(1) to make strenuous or violent efforts in the face of difficulties or opposition, (2) to proceed with difficulty or with great (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate). From the present data, the verb meaning is closer with the first meaning ‘(1) to make strenuous or violent efforts in the face of difficulties or opposition.’ It is clear that the recent data has a relation with the synonymy context of survival because in the novel, the narrator (I) does a violent effort with the boy from District 9.

(8) *defend*: At one point, I hear a noise and pull my knife, thinking I may have to **defend** myself, but i’ve only startled a rabbit. (10:152:4)

In dictionary meaning, the verb *defend* means (1) to drive danger or attack away from, (2) to prove (as a doctoral thesis) valid by answering questions in an oral exam. And an intrinsic verb of *defend* means (1) to take action against attack or challenge, (2) to play or be on defense, (3) to play against the high bidder in a card game (Merriam-Webster’s

Collegiate). From the recent data, the verb that closer with the synonymy relations on the survival context is the first meaning ‘(1) to take action against attack or challenge.’ It is clear that the verb *defend* carries the meaning of an action that is taken in order to win the race and survive the game.

(9) *get back behind the fire line*: If I could **get back behind the fire line**, I could avoid meeting up with Careers. (30: 174: 23)

That verb phrase from the sentence means that ‘to cover’ or ‘to defend from danger (area) or attack from the opponent.’ The narrator (I) tell that she could avoid meeting up with the other tributes, so she must be get back to cover herself. Here, the verb phrase *get back behind the fire line* is the synonymy of the *survival* concept.

(10) *drag myself into a tree*: I would **drag myself into a tree** and take cover now if I could, but the smoke is still thick enough to kill me. (32: 177: 17)

Drag myself into a tree means ‘to take cover behind a tree’. The narrator quickly jump or run to go to that tree and take a cover if she could from the smoke. So, that verb phrase is the synonymy of the *survival* concept.

3. ANTONYMY

Semantic relationships can also exist between pairs of words which have opposite meanings, or antonyms. The analysis of the verbs and verb phrases that show antonymy relation with the the keyword survival results in twenty-one (21) verbs and verb phrases: *beat, disappearing, deteriorate, don’t kill, die, suffer, suffocate, sends a searing pain, trembling, kill me, have not yet had the courage, can’t tolerate, destroyed, I’m too exhausted, fall, dying, banish, they’ll catch each other, The explosion destroyed the hearing in my left ear for good, hurts along*

the knife cut, he’ll die of asphyxiation, and loses his footing.

(11) *disappearing*: Those who have taken flight are **disappearing** into the trees or into the void opposite me. (7: 151: 12)

Literally, *diseappearing* is the present participle of *disappear*, and it means ‘(1) intransitive verb vanish from sight: to cease to be seen, e.g. by moving away or going behind or into something, (2) intransitive verb not be found: to be gone from or no longer be seen in a place without any explanation, (3) intransitive verb cease to exist: to no longer exist, (4) transitive verb cause opponent to disappear: to make a political opponent disappear by arresting or killing the person without due process of law (Microsoft Encarta 2009). From the present datas, it explain that the verb *disappear* or *disappearing* is the opposite from the *survival* context, because of *survival* mean ‘staying alive’, but *disappear* mean ‘lost’. So, it is clear that *disappear* or *disappearing* is the antonym of the *survival* context.

(12) *deteriorate*: For a few days, I’ll be able to function with unpleasant symptoms of dehydration, but after that I’ll **deteriorate** into helplessness and be dead in a week, tops. (13: 154: 1)

In dictionary meaning, the verb *deteriorate* means ‘to become or make something worse in quality, value, or strength’ (Microsoft Encarta Dictionary, 2009). From the recent data, it is clear that the verb *deteriorate* is the antonymy of the *survival* concept.

(13) *die*: But enough to let me **die**? (21: 168: 13)

The verb *die* means ‘(1) intransitive verb stop living: to cease to be alive (refers to a person, plant, or animal), (2) intransitive verb stop

existing: to cease to exist, especially gradually (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). From that meanings, it is clear that the verb *die* shown as an antonym of the *survival* context.

(14) *suffocate*: The heat is horrible, but worse than the heat is the smoke, which threatens to **suffocate** me at any moment. (25: 172: 17)

The verb *suffocate* means ‘(1) die from lack of air: to die from lack of air, or kill somebody by stopping him or her from breathing, (2) stop breathing: to deprive somebody of air or prevent somebody from breathing, or be unable to breathe, (3) feel, or make somebody, too warm: to feel uncomfortable through excessive heat and lack of fresh air, or make somebody feel uncomfortable in this way, (4) prevent somebody or something from developing: to confine and restrict somebody or something with adverse effects, or be or feel confined and restricted in development or self-expression (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). From the recent data, it explains that *suffocate* is the antonym of the *survival* context, it is opposite from that context because it is clear that *suffocate* means ‘stop breathing’ or ‘die from lack of air’. And it is supported by the sentence of the novel that tells that the narrator (I) is threaten to suffocate by the heat of the smoke.

(15) *sends a searing pain*: Discomfort turns to distress until each breath **sends a searing pain** through my chest. (28: 173: 26)

Here, *sends a searing pain* means feel ‘breathless’. The narrator tell that she feels the pain in her chest for each breath that she take. So, from the recent data, it explains that the verb phrase *sends a searing pain* is the antonym of the survival context.

(16) *loses his footing*: I dive forward just catching hold of Peeta as Cato **loses his footing** on the blood-slick horn and plummets to the ground. (76: 336: 26)

From the sentence, the verb phrase *loses his footing* mean that the character *Cato* was slipped by blood on the horn (cornucopia, some place in the arena that was made by metal) and he fall on the ground then die by some wild dog. In dictionary meaning, *lose* means ‘to fail to win a victory at something’ (Microsoft Encarta Dictionary, 2009). Here, it is clear that the verb phrase *loses his footing* is the antonym of the *survival* concept.

4. COLLOCATION

The collocational analysis results in fourteen (14) verbs and verb phrases: *gasping for air, break, will each get, will enjoy our having fun, won the games, I’m dishing up two more small serving of lamb stew and rice, letting me go, had enough to eat, I hand Peeta my knife, load another arrow, haul him back, holding Peeta in some kind of headlock, dive forward just catching hold, and sends my arrow.*

(17) *gasping for air*: I know I need to keep moving, but I’m trembling and light-headed now, **gasping for air** (33:174:3)

The verb *gasp* means ‘to breath in sharply, to draw in breath with a sudden short audible intake, to breathe with labourious effort’ (Microsoft Encarta, 2007). The verb phrase *gasping for air* means that the narrator (I) makes a big effort to take a breathe and get fresh air, although she is in a critical situation. She is trembling, almost fainted and is difficult to move on. To survive one’s life includes to keep on breathing. Therefore, the verb phrase *gasping for air* is a necessary action of someone whose life is threatened or is in danger in order to survive.

(18) *won the games*: How do you think he **won the Games**? (54: 306: 8)

The verb *won* is the past participle of the verb *win*. Literally the verb *win* means ‘achieve victory: to beat any or every opponent or enemy in a competition or fight’, ‘to get something as a prize by beating other competitors’, and ‘to be the reason that somebody is first in something or receives something as a prize’, or ‘to gain something such as respect or friendship, e.g. because of something done or said or an ability shown, or to make somebody do this’ (Microsoft Encarta Dictionary, 2009). The verb phrase *won the Games* is the collocation of the topic of the novel, because of the topic is to *survive* until the end of the Games. On the Games, the Tribute that can be *survive* up to a time of the Games will *won the Games*. Here, the verb phrase from the sentence is necessary action of the character to survive.

(19) *dive forward just catching hold*: I **dive forward just catching hold** of Peeta as Cato loses his footing on the blood-slick horn and plummets to the ground.

The verb phrase from the sentence means that the narrator (I) moving quickly to save *Peeta* when the opponent *Cato* slipped and fall to the ground. Here, in dictionary meaning, the verb *dive* means ‘to fly or make an aircraft fly steeply and rapidly in the direction of the ground or the sea’, ‘to jump quickly to one side or throw yourself forward or sideways to the ground’, or ‘to move quickly and in a rush in a particular direction’ (Microsoft Encarta Dictionary, 2009). It is clear that the verb *dive* of the verb phrase on the sentence is the collocation of the *survival* context.

CONCLUSION

This study of the verbs and verbs phrases shows certain semantic relations with the keyword *survival* that are found in Suzanne

Collins’s *The Hunger Games*. The semantic relation types that are examined in the study are hyponymy, synonymy, antonymy and collocation. The findings of the study include: (1) thirty-four (34) data indicating hyponymy relations with the topic ‘*survive*’ that are found in the novel: *grapple, attack, protect, hidden, fight, guarded, competing, hunting, shot, scramble, flee, extinguished, avoid, dodge, cover, face, treat, recovering, heal, escape* and *feed*, and the verb phrases are: *Do my best, staying power, protect me, rest and drink water, he did save my life, stole the food, make camp for the night, hobbling as fast as he can, waiting to fire, Peeta’s clawing at Cato’s arm, and use his body as a weapon against me*; (2) thirteen (13) verbs and verb phrases that show synonymy relation: *sprint, run, struggle, defend, survived, hurdle, keep moving, get back behind the fire line, drag myself into a tree, manage to sit up, surviving, manage to ignore the thought, gather courage, would live, and stay alive*; (3) twenty-one (21) verbs and verb phrases that show antonymy relations: *beat, disappearing, deteriorate, don’t kill, die, suffer, suffocate, sends a searing pain, trembling, kill me, have not yet had the courage, can’t tolerate, destroyed, I’m too exhausted, fall, dying, banish, they’ll catch each other, The explosion destroyed the hearing in my left ear for good, hurts along the knife cut, he’ll die of asphyxiation, and loses his footing* and (4) fourteen (14) verbs and verb phrases that show collocational relation with the keyword *survival*: *gasping for air, break, will each get, will enjoy our having fun, won the games, I’m dishing up two more small serving of lamb stew and rice, letting me go, had enough to eat, I hand Peeta my knife, load another arrow, haul him back, holding Peeta in some kind of headlock, dive forward just catching hold, and sends my arrow*.

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