

# Occasional Collocations in the Artistic Creation of P. B. Shelly (Based on the Poem "Ginevra")

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**Abstract**—The article focuses on functional-semantic analysis of occasional collocations in the poem "Ginevra" by P. B. Shelly. It is taking place within the framework of combinatorial linguistics which studies the combinatorial and syntagmatic properties of language units. The relevance of the study is related to the examination of atypical, non-reproducible combinations of words that contain rich, often hidden, meaningful capability. These lexical units are a valuable language means in the creation of poetic texts. The lexical meanings of such units are not fixed in dictionaries and can be defined only within a specific context.

**Keywords**—combinatorial linguistics, occasional collocation, occasional combinatorial lexicology, word compatibility, functional-semantic analysis

## I. INTRODUCTION

This investigation relates to the field of combinatorial linguistics which studies the syntagmatic relations of language units and their combinatorial potential. Recently, the combinatorial direction has been expanding significantly. It is supported by a considerable number of science papers that have appeared [1–4]. The following branches of combinatorial linguistic science such as ethnocultural combinatorial lexicology [1], occasional combinatorial lexicology [5], combinatorial paremiology [6] and others are gradually acquiring scientific status.

The term 'collocation' was first used in its linguistic sense by British linguist John Rupert Firth (1890-1960), who famously observed, "You shall know a word by the company it keeps" [7].

A collocation is now defined as a familiar grouping of words, especially words that habitually appear together and thereby convey meaning by association (*break the law, break the news, break the rules, break a habit, break a leg, break a promise, break a record, break a window*, etc.). The combination of these words sounds natural to a native English speaker who typically learns them while learning to speak. Whereas, these word-combinations may be unnatural to non-English speakers or learners of English will most likely need to be taught collocations through explicit instruction. Collocational range refers to the set of items that typically accompany a word. The size of a collocational range is partially determined by a word level of specificity and number of meanings.

The traditional understanding of "collocation" is concerned with its repeatability. As shown in literature, linguists' views on the content of this concept differ significantly – from a broad one including both free combinations of words (*new book, yellow dress, blue flowers*, etc.) and idioms (*sharpen the woods, spill the beans, red tape*, etc.), to a narrow one considering only special units in which one component is used in direct meaning and another in a figurative sense (*take measures, provide assistance, make a decision, give a ring*, etc.). One of the traditional definitions of collocation is a stable, often-occurring combination of words, the compatibility of which is predictable.

However, among collocations a particular type is singled out, namely *occasional collocations* [8, 9], *creative collocations* [10], *marked collocations* [11, 12], and others who possess such distinctive features as infrequency, irregularity and non-reproducibility.

The study of occasional collocations takes place within the framework of occasional combinatorial lexicology. Its main purpose is description of complex, combinatorically conditioned occasional lexical units, or non-normative combinations of words that have restrictions in solving aesthetic, expressive and functional-semantic tasks that authors put in the process of creating their works.

The relevance of the study of occasional units is due to the great interest of linguists in the functional-speech aspect of language and speech. At the same time special combinatorics of words realizes a particular author's goal in a context.

A common feature of all collocations is their combinatorial character, or the ability to form combinations of words for certain semantic, functional, expressive and other goals. In addition to this, the integral features of all collocations are complexity and reference to speech. Differential features of occasional collocations compared with traditional ones are uniqueness, atypicality, irregularity, irreproducibility, novelty, originality, belonging to a concrete author etc.

The novelty of this study consists in determining significance of occasional collocations in the poem *Ginevra* written by the English poet P. B. Shelly.

The purpose of this article is to identify semantics and functions of occasional collocations in the poem *Ginevra* by P.B. Shelly by means of functional-semantic analysis. In this

article occasional collocations are defined as non-standard, combinatorically conditioned combinations of words created on deliberate violation of lexical-semantic compatibility by a concrete author to perform expressive functions in a poetic text. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to examine the concept of "occasional collocation", to identify methods for producing occasional units and their functional purpose through a functional-semantic analysis.

## II. MAIN PRINCIPLES OF THE FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF OCCASIONAL COLLOCATIONS

While creating texts the authors set certain goals, which are primarily associated with the aesthetic impact on the reader. Pursuing this goal the author often deliberately withdraws words meaning beyond the limits of their usual usage, where they acquire figurative, expressive semantics. This allows the reader and the researcher to interpret lexical meaning of these occasional units in an original way. Such meanings are formed only through certain combinations of words, or occasional collocations, which are artificially created by the author. Thus, occasional collocations are unique speech units containing two or more words, formed on norms violation of lexical-semantic compatibility.

The process of occasional collocations formation is not chaotic, but strictly correlated with theoretical principles developed within the framework of combinatorial lexicology which deals with correlation of the word semantics and compatibility, syntagmatic relations of language units and the language system, compatibility functions, etc. According to these theoretical principles in occasional collocations:

1) meaning given by the author is updated (it is based on the actualization of potential, probabilistic and other semes in lexemes that constitute the occasional unit);

2) conditions for the task implementation are fulfilled (as a rule, the creation of occasional collocations occurs on the basis of deliberate violation of lexical-semantic compatibility);

3) lexemes composition is determined and word combination (collocation) is created in the way to reflect the meaning that the author wants to render;

All this means that occasional collocations actualize their specific semantics through unique combinatorics of words. It occurs when semantically distant words have common semes in their lexical meanings. They help to unite concepts that are incompatible in reality and acquire their actual sense only in a given context.

Occasional collocations usually function in artistic and poetic works. According to Y. Lotman, in a poetic context a word loses its usual meaning and is endowed with semantic specificity [13]. Thus, in a literary text the nature of the relationship between words prescribes the lexical units semantics.

During the study of occasional collocations in literary and poetic texts, a special method for these units examination or a functional-semantic analysis has been developed. This is a special set of procedures aimed at identifying the contextual

meaning and functions of occasional collocations in context. The functional-semantic analysis includes the following stages:

1) violation type identification of words compatibility; occasional collocations are mostly created by deliberate deviation from the rules of lexical-semantic compatibility;

2) semic analysis procedure whose purpose is to identify iterative semes in occasional collocation components;

3) identification of occasional collocations formation; the creation of occasional collocations is based on such linguistic and stylistic phenomena as metaphorization, metonymization, pleonasm, synesthesia, epithet, oxymoron, contamination of senses, etc;

4) function determination of occasional collocations in concrete contexts; there are emotional-expressive, periphrastic, contrastive and amplifying functions.

As the study shows, authors' desire to express their individuality has originated in the era of romanticism. According to I. Barinshtein, the basis of romantic worldview is universalism, subjectivism, and individualism [14]. The proof of this is the presence and functioning of a large number of occasional collocations in poetic works of the romantic period. The work of P.B. Shelley belongs to the epoch of bright romance as his poems are fulfilled with many occasional lexical units.

## III. FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF OCCASIONAL COLLOCATIONS IN THE POEM OF P. B. SHELLEY "GINEVRA"

A famous Florentine legend underlies Shelly's unfinished poem *Ginevra*. Its plot is a tragic fate of a young girl Ginevra, who was forced to marry an elderly nobleman called Gerardi. However, Ginevra's heart belonged to a young man named Antonio, who accused her of betrayal. After the wedding ceremony the poor girl was found unconscious in the bridal bed.

The poem begins with description of Ginevra's deep feelings on the day of her marriage with Gerardi:

*Wild, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one  
Who staggers forth into the air and sun  
From the dark chamber of mortal fever,  
Bewildered, and incapable ... [15].*

The occasional collocation *mortal fever* is used to describe Ginevra's oppressive feelings before the marriage ceremony. Semic analysis shows that this collocation is formed by combining two words that contain iterative seme "woe like death". In the noun *fever* the potential seme "bitterness" is actualized. When lexemes *mortal* and *fever* are joined into one collocation, the reader has impression that Ginevra is so unhappy that she wants to die. In this fragment P. B. Shelly draws a mournful atmosphere that is directly opposite to the bride's emotions on the wedding day. This effect is reached by a metaphorical transfer of the concepts "grief -> heat -> death". Therefore, it can be argued that the occasional collocation *mortal fever* is formed by metaphorization. This collocation produces a special effect on the reader and introduces anxiety into the description of the main character's emotional state. So it indicates the realization of the emotional-expressive function of the considered collocation.

The next fragment of the poem describes Ginevra's coming to the altar. Her wedding dress is decorated with jewelry but it fails to make an impression on her:

*She scarce felt conscious - but the weary glare  
Lay like a chaos of unwelcome light,  
Vexing the sense with gorgeous undelight* [15].

The occasional collocation *gorgeous undelight* combines two lexemes that have opposite meanings in this context. The noun *undelight* is an occasional word created by Shelly. This word is not present in English dictionaries [4] that proves its occasional character. As a rule, using the prefix *un-* the opposite meaning of lexeme *delight* is formed. Therefore the meaning of *undelight* may be defined as "displeasure", "indignation", "disgust". Semic analysis shows that the occasional collocation *gorgeous undelight* combines two incompatible concepts: 1) adjective *gorgeous* actualizes the semes of "shine", "elegance", "luxury" semes; 2) occasional noun *undelight* actualizes the semes of "sadness", "disappointment", "bitterness" semes. A combination of words that have opposite meanings describes both Ginevra's appearance and internal state, e.i. her luxurious wedding dress and depressing feelings at the same time caused by her internal protest to marry. Thus, in this context the *gorgeous undelight* actualizes multidirectional semes (magnificence-oppression). It creates a contrast in this fragment of the poem – Ginevra's sad feelings against the luxurious atmosphere of the wedding ceremony. Thus occasional collocation *gorgeous undelight* is formed with the help of oxymoron. In the context this collocation describes contradictory nature of the event, creates senses antinomy and proves realizing the contrastive function.

In the next fragment of the poem the author describes the garden where Ginevra meets her lover Antonio.

*And through the sunny air, with jangling tone,  
The music of the merry marriage-bells  
Killing the azure silence, sinks and swells* [15].

The occasional collocation *azure silence* allows the poet to describe Ginevra's emotional state. Shelly demonstrates her dejected state against her kindness, humility and purity through color schemes. The word-combination *azure color* symbolizes loyalty, honesty and calm. Ginevra married an unloved man; however, she is still faithful to her beloved Antonio. The collocation *azure silence* covers at once two levels of sensations: vision (*azure*) + hearing (*silence*). In the word *azure* the potential semes "calm", "serenity" and "purity" are actualized. In the word *silence* the semes "calm" and "peace" are actualized. The semic analysis shows that in this context the iterative semes "loyalty" and "inner serenity" unite two words. Two different sensations are combined in collocation *azure silence* so that it is created on synesthesia. This collocation presents an aesthetic reflection of reality, creates a non-existent associative image and performs an emotional-expressive function.

When reading the next passage it becomes clear that Antonio is depressed and offended. The young man asks the poor girl a question: "Is this thy faith?" Ginevra expresses her willingness to sacrifice her life:

*If the grave which hides  
The victim from the tyrant  
The cheek that whitens from the eyes that dart  
Imperious inquisition to the heart  
That is another's, could dissever ours ...* [15].

Ginevra calls her wedding ceremony *imperious inquisition*. This collocation reflects her helplessness in choosing a life partner. As semic analysis shows, the adjective *imperious* actualizes the potential semes "coercion" and "pressure". The lexeme *inquisition* contains "torment" and "ordeal" semes. The occasional collocation *imperious inquisition* is based on iterative semes "hopelessness" and "doom." This associative transfer is carried out through the author's metaphor. The marriage is like unbearable torture for Ginevra. The original author's association elicits a vivid emotions and indicates the realization of an emotional-expressive function.

Ginevra tells Antonio that soon the sound of wedding bells will be replaced by funeral songs, and the flowers in their bedroom will decorate her coffin.

*And glazed her eyes, and spread an atmosphere  
Round her, which chilled the burning noon with fear,  
The image of the thought...* [15].

The results of semic analysis show that the occasional collocation *image of the thought* unites two words with common semes "idea" and "representation". In lexeme *image* a potential seme "appearance" occurs. It is the author's metaphorical representation of Ginevra's fantasies. All this allows us to assert that collocation *the image of the thought* reflects the girl's thoughts that seem real to her and acquire a physical form. In this passage, we observe a noticeable expansion of the semantic volume of both components due to the emergence of figurative meaning. Thus, this occasional collocation is based on metaphorization. *The image of the thought* is the author's thoughts renaming that arises in Ginevra's broken heart, thereby it realizes a periphrastic function.

In the next fragment we see that the bridesmaids take Ginevra out of the garden and leave her alone in the bedroom to change her wedding dress. The wedding feast continues, and the guests are surprised by the bride's long absence. One of the bridesmaids goes up the bedroom and discovers lifeless Ginevra on the bridal bed.

*They found Ginevra dead! if it be death  
To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath,  
With waxen cheeks, and limbs cold, stiff, and white* [15].

The occasional collocation *waxen cheeks* characterizes Ginevra's appearance – her face became pale and stiff. The semantics of *waxen* is updated with the help of potential semes "immobility" and "lifelessness". As semic analysis shows this collocation is formed by explication of the common seme 'stillness'. The collocation *waxen cheeks* describes Ginevra's state and indicates all tragedy of the event. The choice of the adjective *waxen* is not accidental, but the author's way to describe catalepsy (it is also called *wax flexibility*), or the state of 'imaginary' death which is characterized by muscular

rigidity and posture fixity. This associative transfer indicates that collocation *waxen cheeks* is realized by metaphorization and performs an emotional-expressive function in the context.

As we learn from the following fragments Ginevra did not die: “*They found Ginevra dead! if it be death / To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath*” ... [15].

Consider another occasional collocation in the following context:

*And open eyes, whose fixed and glassy light  
Mocked at the speculation they had owned ...* [15].

Shelley describes Ginevra’s look using *glassy light* collocation. Its components are distinguished by common semantic characteristics. The lexeme *glassy* contains semes "immobility" and "transparency", and the lexeme *light* contains "shine" and "gloss" semes. The iterative seme in both words is “glassy-eyed look”. Thus, Ginevra’s eyes are wide open, she has a “frozen look” like people who are in an unconscious state. The collocation *glassy light* is characterized by the combination of two images at once: one is in the direct meaning (*light*), and the other is made by means of metaphorical transfer (*glassy*). This proves that this occasional unit is based on metaphorization. Thus, this collocation due to the original euphemistic description performs a periphrastic function.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The poetic work of P.B. Shelley’s, who was one of the most famous representatives of the English Romanticism can be characterised by undoubted originality confirmed by using a large number of occasional collocations that reveal his idiosyncrasy, opinions and worldview. The study of his creativity showed that occasional units in his poems contain ambiguous images, a kind of "codes" that can be revealed with the help of a complex functional-semantic analysis. The obtained results of the analysis indicate that occasional collocations functioning in Shelly’s poem *Ginevra* are based mostly on metaphorization.

Occasional collocations of the metaphorical type are very expressive because they have unlimited possibilities in bringing together different objects being compared. Interpreting the meaning of occasional collocations formed by metaphorization, the reader builds a special interpretational scheme based on the associative connection between its components. Despite the fact that readers’ interpretative schemes are different, there is a common thing such as objective or understanding of the collocation meaning due to the commonality of the associative apperception base.

In the poem, there are also occasional collocations formed by synesthesia. They can affect the reader's emotional sphere appealing to different levels of sensations.

The main feature of occasional collocations formed by oxymoron is the combination of components that are opposite to each other but it is possible to single out something common in the components of the collocation.

Occasional collocations in poem *Ginevra* realize mostly emotional-expressive function as the author’s attempt is not only to describe in detail the characters’ deep feelings, but also

to give his own view of what’s being described as well as to influence the readers’ emotional sphere by compassing for Ginevra or causing an injustice sense of fate etc. With the help of occasional collocations, Shelley produces the effect of deceived waiting when he describes catalepsy not death.

Occasional collocations in the poem also perform a periphrastic function. It means they represent a kind of the author’s renomination. A contrastive function is an effective way of reflecting contradiction of the described fact.

It is important to emphasize that occasional collocations do not distract attention from the narrative. On the contrary, due to non-standard, often non-existent images, they combine the description of the sensual (abstract) sphere with the subject-specific representation. Thus, in poem *Ginevra* by means of occasional collocations, Shelly creates a complex interpretative mechanism, its purpose is to expand the narrative plan by specifying emotional perception of described by the author events. This is the specific feature of these analyzed units.

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