

Assessing Character-Habitat Dynamics: The Efficacy of Leech's Componential Analysis in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*

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Abstract

The intricate interaction of characters with their world is a crucial feature of literary fiction, but its thoroughgoing linguistic analysis continues to be an issue. The present study investigated the adequacy of Geoffrey Leech's (1981) componential analysis (CA) model as a semantico-stylistic tool for inquiring into and quantifying the 'logical compatibility' between characters and their world in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913). Applying CA's binary distinctive features to selected lexical items conveying characters' internal states and their corresponding habitats during the main plot stages of the novel, the study applies a mixed-methods design. The analysis probes to what degree the systematic use can yield quantifiable semantic congruence estimates and further assist with an objective and more sensitive account of Lawrence's stylistic choices in creating such central narrative dynamics. Empirical evidence from analysis of model passages indicates that Leech's CA offers a useful, if not problem-free, model for this kind of investigation, providing a systematic means of overcoming the limits of purely impressionistic interpretation. The study discusses the value of CA in creating close, feature-based textual analysis and its limitation in semantic reductionism and handling intricate literary language. Lastly, the article argues for the utility of CA, along with qualitative interpretation, as a technical device for tracing the lexical contours of character-environment dynamics, hence serving the purposes of methodological refinement for stylistics and enhanced comprehension of Lawrence's authorial technique.

Keywords: Componential Analysis, Character-Habitat, D.H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*, Stylistics

INTRODUCTION

The intricate relationship of characters with their environment, or ‘habitat,’ is a narrative building block of literary fiction that influences character development, thematic weight, and overall textual meaning (Lodge, 1992). Stylistics, being an approach devoted to the linguistic analysis of literary text, tries to uncover how authors construct such relationships through specific linguistic choices (Simpson, 2004). Where traditional literary analysis is useful, more ordered and linguistics-oriented analysis can render it more objective and reproducible (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010). Semantics, or meaning in language, has important equipment for accomplishing this, particularly lexical semantics that examines word meaning. One of such tools, Componential Analysis (CA), offers a vehicle for decomposing word meanings into their minimal distinctive features and thereby making it possible to examine systematically semantic relations (Leech, 1981).

This essay explored the efficacy of Geoffrey Leech’s (1981) componential model of CA as a semantic-stylistic tool for analysis of the ‘logical compatibility’ between characters and their world in D.H. Lawrence’s classic novel, *Sons and Lovers* (1913). By ‘logical compatibility’ in this instance, is intended congruence or dissonance between a character’s narrated internal state (psychological, emotional) and semantic features of their narrated surroundings (physical, emotional, fictional). By deploying CA on selected lexical items describing characters and their worlds in different stages of the plot, the current study sought to quantify this compatibility. This quantitative component, based on qualitative justification, also sought to quantify not just the quality of character-habitat interactions in Lawrence’s work but the useability and limitations of Leech’s CA model towards such delicate stylistic examination. The argument is that CA can elucidate the subtle linguistic means by which an author achieves or subverts character-environment consonance and thereby illuminates more fully authorial style and narrative construction.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Background

Stylistics, taken in an extremely general sense as the linguistic study of style, applies theoretical frameworks from various levels of linguistics to the analysis of texts (Wales, 2011). Literary stylistics, in this, is interested in the aesthetic function of language in literature. Semantics, particularly lexical semantics, is key to stylistic analysis because it deals with meaning at the word level and the interactions between words (Cruse, 1986). CA was a structuralist remedy to lexical semantics that aimed at describing word meanings as wholes but not so much through analyzing them into a restricted set of universal semantic features or components (Nida, 1975; Lyons, 1977). Geoffrey Leech’s (1981) framework, perhaps the most well-known formulation of CA, uses binary distinctive features (e.g., [+HUMAN], [-ADULT]) to separate senses and graph semantic fields. This method, by breaking down meanings into basic contrastive elements, provides a degree of objectivity in lexis comparison and contrast. Its application in stylistics assumes that the accumulation of these features in character and setting descriptions may cast light on underlying patterns and contribute to the resulting stylistic effect crafted by the author, for instance, the production of harmony or alienation.

Empirical Background

CA, which has its roots in lexical semantics, has found uses in a range of interconnected linguistic and literary studies. For instance, Eesa (2007) demonstrated the effectiveness of CA in analyzing and translating metaphor, highlighting its capacity for the decomposition of inferential constituents of words between source and target languages. Belfarhi (2013) applied CA to literary meaning in Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and claimed that CA can show semantic relation networks dispersed over a literary piece to help readers with systematic meaning creation. Hobi (2019) applied Leech's model to conduct a comparative study of gendered words in English and Spanish and showed the manner in which semantic features are relevant to know and to distinguish word meaning across languages. These, and others (e.g., Al-Zoubi, 2009, translation; Nwachi et al., 2020, second language instruction), validate the applicability of CA. However, its specific, numerically measured application to quantify the stylistic build-up of character-habitat match in longer prose fiction, particularly in terms of the methodological appropriateness of Leech's model for the specific trait, is a gap awaiting further investigation.

Gap in the Literature

Though the research listed above demonstrates the worth of CA used in certain linguistic and literary fields—ranging from metaphorical understanding (Eesa, 2007) through general literary meaning (Belfarhi, 2013) to cross-linguistic lexical contrast (Hobi, 2019)—there is one particular gap. There are few investigations that used Leech's (1981) binary componential model systematically to assess quantitatively a specific stylistic feature like the logical compatibility between characters' inner states and their multi-surfaced environments in a complicated modernist novel. Existing literature is more likely to hinge on overall meaning breakdown or concrete lexical sets rather than coherent analysis of character-setting interaction across narrative plot phases. Besides, there also needs to be a critical evaluation of the methodological strengths and weaknesses of Leech's CA in terms of the subtle and predominantly ambiguous language of literary setting and characterization, particularly in a writer like D.H. Lawrence, for his psychological insight and suggestively evocative prose. This study aimed to bridge this gap by testing Leech's CA competently as a tool for this specific stylistic inquiry.

The Problem

Character and environment are a crucial part of fictional narrative, but the subtle construction of this relationship through linguistic devices can prove problematic to comprehend in its entirety for readers and to criticize on an equal plane. Audiences might of course respond naturally to senses of harmony or dissonance between character and environment, but the precise lexical and semantic operations responsible for generating such responses tend to be implicit. Traditional literary analysis, while delivering intelligent readings, can sometimes be perceived as impressionistic or subjective in its identification of particular linguistic evidence supporting such readings (Short, 1996). Thus, analytical tools must exist which are capable of mapping these relationships on a lexical-semantic level in a systematic way and providing a more empirical basis for stylistic conclusions.

While stylistics is capable of offering a range of tools, the specific issue is to discover a means capable of breaking down the usually involved explanations of characters' mental lives and their diverse environments into comparable units of sense. How can a writer's success at representing—or consciously

subverting—a logical correlation between a character’s emotional status and the mood of the environment around them be assessed in an organized way? The issue, thus, is the absence of a well-tried, systematic, and linguistically motivated method to systematically study and measure the extent of logical congruence between characters and their environment as a specific stylistic feature of literary works. This study contends that Leech’s (1981) CA, which initially came from lexical semantics, can address this problem by offering a systematic means of feature extraction and comparison.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to:

- Assess the efficacy of Leech’s (1981) model of CA in delineating and quantifying the logical compatibility between characters and their habitat in D.H. Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers*.
- Investigate the extent to which a componential approach can offer systematic, and arguably more objective, insights into D.H. Lawrence’s stylistic construction of character-habitat relationships.
- Evaluate the strengths and limitations of Leech’s CA as a methodological tool for stylistic research focusing on character-environment dynamics in extended literary prose.

Novelty of the Study

Novelty of this research lies primarily in its specific methodological application and scope. While CA is an established semantic tool, this study breaks new ground in its systematic and quantified application to investigate the subtle stylistic nuance of ‘logical compatibility’ between figures and their rich habitats (physical, emotional, fictional) along the narrative path of a key modernist novel. As compared to more generic applications of CA to literary meaning, this study seeks to establish and validate a replicable model for assessing one specific stylistic relationship, thereby yielding a more fine-grained view of Lawrence’s approach. The study also involves critical evaluation of Leech’s (1981) binary model in itself, balancing its real-world utility, strengths, and inherent constraints when applied to the richly textured, frequently ambivalent descriptive writing characteristic of literary fiction. This keen methodological examination for such a specific stylistic purpose introduces a new approach to both Lawrentian scholarship and semantico-stylistic research.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1.** *To what extent can Leech’s (1981) model of CA be effectively employed to investigate and quantify the logical compatibility between characters and their habitat in D.H. Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers*?*
- RQ2.** *How does the systematic application of CA to character-habitat dynamics contribute to a more objective and nuanced understanding of D.H. Lawrence’s stylistic choices in reflecting this relationship?*

Significance of the Study

This study is significant and valuable in several areas to which it is related. Methodologically, it intervenes in stylistics by experimentally testing and evaluating one specific semantic tool—Leech’s CA—to analyze the semantic potential of a complex stylistic feature of literary stories. In trying to quantify the ‘logical compatibility’ of setting and character, it offers a presumably replicable model that goes beyond impressionistic reading, thus enhancing the empirical foundation of stylistic examination. This exploration of the application of CA to character-environment interactions addresses a specific methodological lacuna and demonstrates how semantic theories can be made operational for close textual analysis, hopefully prompting further interdisciplinary work in literary linguistics. Literarily critically, while methodological competence is this article’s overarching concern, its application to *Sons and Lovers* will necessarily give early signals of D.H. Lawrence’s stylistic skill. Through the scientific examination of lexical choices constructing states of character and environmental information, the study can inform us on how Lawrence achieves certain emotional and thematic effects with regard to the embeddedness or alienation of characters. This provides a more detailed image of Lawrentian style, here, his representation of psychological response to environment, his great preoccupation in his work (Kinkead-Weekes, 1996).

Pedagogically, the rigorous approach demonstrated can prove helpful for teaching literary analysis. It can sensitize students to the subtle way in which linguistic choices construct meaning and reader impression, and equip them with a structured framework for dissecting complex literary descriptions. For future research, the study provides avenues for applying or adapting the proposed CA framework to other authors, genres, or other stylistic features including semantic congruence or dissonance. The critical evaluation of Leech’s model within this specific context also provides valuable

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, selectively merging quantitative analysis based on componential feature counts with qualitative meaning-making. The central aim of this methodological merger was to critically evaluate the suitability of Leech’s (1981) CA model in the specific context of testing character-habitat compatibility in D.H. Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers*. The quantitative element was designed to implement an empirical system of calculating and measuring the degree of semantic congruence or dissonance between characters’ internal states and their enacted environments. Underpinning this, the qualitative element offered a detailed talking point for the empirical application of the model, its necessary strengths and limitations in the presence of difficult literary language, and the broader stylistic ramifications of the research.

Research Design

The research was structured as a case study that was both descriptive and evaluative, centered on a single very influential literary work. The structure went through several key phases. In the first step, the novel *Sons and Lovers* was segmented according to its five overall plot stages—Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution. This breakdown of structure provided a chronological story line from which the emergence of character-habitat relationships, and whether the CA model could support these changes, was discussed. From this division, each stage of plot was reflected through thoughtfully selected representative quotations. These quotations were chosen on the basis of their most vivid

representations of the internal state of major characters, such as emotion and psychological attitude, together with surrounding descriptions of their rich environments, such as physical setting, sensed atmosphere, and prominent details of the fictional world. The site of analysis within these quotations was content words—i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs—because these categories of words had the greatest semantic weight regarding the descriptions at hand. Leech's (1981) CA model, which works on binary distinctive features such as [+HAPPY], [-SAFE], [+BRIGHT], or [-WARM], was then applied mechanistically to the selected lexical items from character and environment description. The core of the design was to quantify the 'logical compatibility' between character and environment. This was made tangible by extremely detailed comparison of the semantic features assigned to the character's described state and those assigned to their surroundings. A ratio in the form of a percentage was then calculated on the basis of the relative degree of matching or logically equivalent features, thereby providing a quantitative measure of this stylistic linkage. Finally, the entire process, from feature assignment to quantitative output and final interpretation, was extensively scrutinized. This evaluation tried to determine the specific strengths, innate constraints, and general effectiveness of Leech's CA model when applied to this very type of stylistic analysis in extended literary prose.

Corpus of the Study

The principal corpus for the study was D.H. Lawrence's novel *Sons and Lovers*, initially published in 1913. Material used for the analysis was an authoritative scholarly version, for instance, Penguin Classics or Cambridge Edition of the Works of D.H. Lawrence, to ensure textual reliability. Since CA demands profundity, research was not carried out on the whole novel. Instead, it focused on a focused set of passages regarded as particularly typical of most important character-habitat interactions. The selection was influenced by points in the text when the verbal depiction of a character's inner life and immediate world was most descriptive and evocative, and therefore fertile bases for the CA.

Model of the Study

The componential model guiding this research was directly adopted from Geoffrey Leech's (1981) CA model, presented verbatim in his seminal work, *Semantics: The Study of Meaning*. This model assumes that the meaning of any word can be systematically analyzed into a finite number of smallest, binary distinctive features, such as +ADULT or -MALE. For the specific purposes of this study, these fundamental characteristics were adapted and expanded to properly reflect the homologous semantic properties of characters' affective states (e.g., [+HAPPY], [-PEACEFUL]), their cognitive traits ([+CONFIDENT], [-SECURE]), and the unique characteristics of their environments ([+BRIGHT], [-ISOLATED], [+WARM], [-THREATENING]). The inherent binarity of Leech's feature system provided a systematic and predictable way for contrasting analysis of the semantic features of words used in the description of the character with those used in the description of their surroundings, thus making it convenient to test their logical compatibility.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection in this research involved a systematic, sequential process for the sake of encouraging systematicity and relevance. The initial task was a meticulous and thorough reading through of the entire novel, *Sons and Lovers*, which made it possible to determine the key plot phases and identify narrative segments with significant character-habitat interactions. The next step involved selecting representative quotes systematically from each of the identified five plot phases. The criteria for selecting these quotes were three: they had to give a clear description of the internal state of a main character, e.g., their feelings or psychological state; they had to give a simultaneous and detailed description of the immediate physical, emotional, or perceived fictional environment of that character; and finally, they had to contain a sufficient density of content words that were prone to being well-analyzed componentially. Following the selection of quotations, the most relevant content words—i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs—depicting the condition of the character and his/her surroundings were selected for closer examination. In order to monitor and guarantee reliability in the assignment of semantic features to the words, especially with regard to literary language properties, an initial pilot phase of feature assignment was conducted. This involved step-by-step polishing by the lead analyst or cross-coding exercise in case there were more than one analyst involved, all based on Leech's (1981) dichotomous structure and always in the specific situation provided by the novel.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis undertaken was done through performing a mechanical sequence of steps. Firstly, for every content word identified as relevant to the state of the character and that of their surroundings in selected quotations, a list of relevant semantic features was drawn up. This was done rigidly according to Leech's (1981) binary system, e.g., imposing features such as [-HAPPY] and [-OPTIMISTIC] on a "gloomy" character, or [-BRIGHT] and [+ENCLOSED] on a "dark room." Quantification of compatibility then ensued as step two. For each quote, the set of semantic features describing the character's internal state was attentively compared with the set of features describing their surroundings. 'Logical compatibility' was then deduced by analyzing the resemblance of the sets of features. For instance, a character described by the feature [-HAPPY] in an environment described by [+BLEAK] would have been rated (or "was rated") as having high logical compatibility. Conversely, a trait like [+HAPPY] in a [+BLEAK] setting would have signaled lower logical compatibility, perhaps to imply irony or deliberate dissonance on the part of the author.

Each of the quotes was then given a unique compatibility score, as a percentage. This was operationalized by dividing the number of congruent or logically related feature pairs by the number of distinct features taken into account for either the habitat or the character, and then multiplied by 100. These component compatibility scores were added up to produce statistical totals for each major character across one of the five stages of the plot, and a total compatibility score across the novel, allowing quantitative insight into trends. The fourth step involved qualitative explanation of these quantitative results. This explanation described specific examples of how Leech's CA accounted for character-habitat compatibility or incompatibility, handled the subtleties, ambiguities, or challenges involved in mapping binary features onto the density of literary language, and evaluated the built-in strengths and weaknesses of the model in doing so. Finally, after completion of this in-depth application and interpretation, a general assessment of the effectiveness of Leech's CA model in answering the research questions of the study was formed.

RESULTS

Results of Research Question 1

The first research question aimed to determine how effectively Leech's (1981) model of CA could be used to quantify the logical compatibility between characters and their habitat in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. Applying Leech's CA to excerpts of chosen texts in *Sons and Lovers* demonstrated that the model can be applied methodically to analyze and quantify elements of compatibility between environment and character. The binary semantic feature structure (e.g., [+/- HAPPY], [+/- BRIGHT]) provided a systematic means of deconstructing lexical items used to describe internal states of characters and their corresponding environments. This permitted systematic comparison of the semantic character profile and the physical environment profile. For instance, during the Exposition phase of the novel, characterization of Mrs. Morel's internal state, for instance, lexical words describing features such as [-HAPPY] or [-OPTIMISTIC], were compared systematically with features gleaned from the description of her environment, in terms of features such as [+OLD], [+LOW], or [+MISERABLE], etc.

Its quantification, derived from the calculation of percentage scores as a function of assigned feature congruence, was a plausible analytic exercise, yielding representative estimates of semantic resonance. Table 1 presents a table of mean compatibility scores for main characters in a sample of early plot stages derived from CA of typical quotes.

Table 1

Average Componential Compatibility Scores for Key Characters in Early Plot Phases of Sons and Lovers

Character	Plot Phase	Average Compatibility Score (%)
Mrs. Morel	Exposition	63%
Mr. Morel	Exposition	50%
William Morel	Rising Action	81%
Paul Morel	Rising Action	85%

As indicated by Table 1, CA model managed to generate different quantitative outcomes for different character-habitat interactions. Analysis indicated that Mrs. Morel in the Exposition registered an average compatibility score of 63% and Mr. Morel in the same stage had a score of 50%. The much greater scores (81% for William Morel and 85% for Paul Morel) in the Rising Action phase show that the model is sufficiently sensitive to register very likely varying levels of authorially created compatibility for various characters or between various phases of the narrative. This demonstrates that Leech's model provides a valuable, systematic, and quantifiable but oversimplistic method of examining this specific stylistic element in a piece of literature.

The model was successful, however, only if contextualized and consistent feature assignment was applied—a systematic process that still contained an interpretive element. The CA model was most immediately and helpfully applicable to explicit emotion descriptions and specific physical environments. Its capacity to handle more abstract or metaphorical character-environment relations required more interpretive freedom in derivation and feature assignment. Thus, the quantification in this case is more suggestive than absolute. Despite this, Leech's CA provided a starting and systematic framework that allowed some degree of systematicity to be infused into the analysis of character-environment relationships.

Results of Research Question 2

The second research question aimed to explore how the systematic application of CA to character-habitat dynamics contributes to a more objective and nuanced understanding of D.H. Lawrence's stylistic choices in reflecting this relationship. The systematic use of CA of character-habitat relations in *Sons and Lovers* served to generate a more objective explanation of D.H. Lawrence's stylistic choices through the necessity of a systematic examination of certain words and their constituent semantic components, thereby going beyond mere holistic or impressionistic understanding. The process of reducing descriptive sentences to individualized characteristics—for instance, noting that Paul Morel's feelings with characteristics like [+LOST] or [+DESPERATE] consistently co-occurred with environmental adjectives with characteristics like [-BRIGHT], [-SAFE], or [+EMPTY]—provided concrete linguistic evidence for character-environment correlation analyses. The analytical process, while necessarily reductionist, provides a reconstructable and arguable foundation for arguments about how compatibility or incompatibility is semantically constructed through the author. For example, the general elevated average compatibility scores calculated for Paul Morel's personality at several stages of the narrative (indicated by the 85% in Rising Action in Table 1, and further embodied in similarly high scores within the Climax stage analysis) quantitatively support the vital observation of his profound and often overwhelming interaction with his conceived world and strong individualistic influences.

This method also made for a more nuanced realization by putting on the surface the specific semantic axes which Lawrence is working with in order to perform particular narrative effects. Instead of making general statements such as “the character felt alienated,” CA allows us to be specific about which particular semantic features from among the environmental descriptions (e.g., a bundle of [+COLD], [+ISOLATED], [-WELCOMING]) and which other features from the character's situation come together to form a lexically realized state of [-COMFORTABLE] or [+ALONE]. Table 2 provides an example of the micro-level procedure by which feature congruence was established for one particular quotation.

Table 2

Illustrative Componential Feature Analysis for a Single Quotation

Element	Lexical Item(s)	Componential Features	Congruence with Habitat Features
Character	“felt desolate”	[-HAPPY], [+ALONE], [-HOPEFUL]	
Habitat	“bleak, empty moor”	[-WARM], [+OPEN], [-POPULATED], [+ISOLATED]	Congruence noted: [+ALONE] with [+ISOLATED], [-POPULATED]; [-HAPPY], [-HOPEFUL] with general sense of bleakness.

As illustrated by the analytical principle presented in Table 2, the method goes on to detailed feature alignments. A general trend of the novel for high character-habitat compatibility (e.g., a representative overall average of approximately 73% from the larger analysis developed for this study) suggests a dominant stylistic strategy in *Sons and Lovers*. Lawrence appears to routinely create strong semantic resonance between his characters' inner lives and their outer (and internalised) worlds, a tendency rendered more visible and empirically verifiable by this feature-by-feature CA.

It must be acknowledged that objectivity fostered by this method exists primarily in making the steps of analysis transparent and, in principle, replicable, provided similar feature definitions and

application. Initial recognition of representative quotations and indeed interpretation and feature assignment, particularly for indeterminate or polysemous lexical items, necessarily involve reasoned interpretive decisions on the analyst's part. Furthermore, the subtlety most foregrounded by this application of CA is at the lexical-semantic feature level. The model, as here avowedly employed, is less inherently suited to capturing the impact of larger pragmatic contexts, complex syntactic structures, or extended metaphorical networks on the character-habitat interaction, although it provides a valuable lexical foundation for such further, more comprehensive research.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this investigation into the utility of Leech's (1981) CA in establishing character-habitat congruence in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* produce some significant points of discussion. The systematic use of CA confirmed its value as a rigorous analytic tool in literary stylistics. This permitted a movement away from predominantly intuitive accounts of character-environment relations and in the direction of a more linguistically grounded examination of Lawrence's authorial technique. That it is possible to quantify aspects of semantic congruence between character states and environmental descriptions, as the percentages of compatibility that have been calculated (e.g., Paul Morel achieving a mean compatibility of 85% for the Rising Action stage, as in Table 1), indicates that CA can indeed yield a systematic, if suggestive, measure of this stylistic device. This finding is in line with the spirit of previous research that has used CA to close semantic deconstruction in other linguistic and literary fields (Belfarhi, 2013; Eesa, 2007), with the present study taking it one step further through its application to a quantified measurement of a relational dynamic unfolding across the plot structure of a novel.

The analysis carried out revealed both the inherent strengths and the practical limitations of applying such a binary feature model as Leech's to the analysis of complex literary texts. Among the principal strengths of the model is its systematicity, which imposes on the analyst a careful reading of the text and an explicit formulation of the semantic features identified by the analyst. Such close attention can lead to a more nuanced appreciation of Lawrence's specific lexical choices. For example, the analysis revealed how an accumulation of features such as [-BRIGHT] or [+COLD] in environmental descriptions tends to coincide with overt character states characterized by features such as [-HAPPY] or [+ISOLATED]. However, the reduction of rich, evocative literary description to binary semantic features inevitably involves some simplification. To capture the nuances of human feeling or the lush evocative possibilities of Lawrence's imagery (e.g., the "dusky, golden softness" of early representations of Walter Morel) with bland [+/-] markers is an ambitious analytical task. Feature assignment, particularly for more abstract entities or metaphorical applications of language, involves a measure of subjectivity, even as analysts strive for methodological precision. This observation highlights the urgent need for strong qualitative interpretation to supplement and situate such quantitative work in literary stylistics.

Furthermore, the analysis must come to terms with the complex status of 'logical compatibility' as a literary mechanism. While this study operationalized compatibility in terms of measuring feature congruence, it is recognized that authors like Lawrence frequently employ irony, contrast, and deliberate dissonance for specific thematic and characterizational reasons. As it happens, a low figure of numerical compatibility, such as is yielded by the CA model, will not necessarily always point to a deficiency in the stylistic performance of the author but, in some instances, will actually be an effective and intentional description of alienation, inner turmoil, or a character's misperception of reality. The CA model, as applied

in this study, is largely valuable for ascertaining the degree of direct semantic resonance within the lexical choice. Further qualitative analysis remains to be done to fully account for the narrative function of that observed resonance or its palpable absence. The fluctuation in compatibility scores between different characters and evolving plot phases within *Sons and Lovers* recorded here shows that Lawrence masterfully manages this interactive aspect of his fiction, and CA provides one viable window through which such modulations can be formally observed and argued.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to carry out an assessment of the functionality of Leech's (1981) CA model towards the very specific purpose of analyzing and quantifying the logical compatibility between environment and characters in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. It also aimed to determine how systematic application further contributes to the comprehension of Lawrence's stylistic choices toward the portrayal of this dynamic. Considering the application of CA to example sentences and subsequent analysis, this writer's opinion is that Leech's model does offer a systematic and coherent, if not free of problems, procedure for this type of stylistic analysis. The study successfully demonstrated that lexical character state and environmental descriptors can be decomposed into binary semantic components and, from them, quantitative indicative measures of their congruity can be formulated. This methodical process clearly results in a more objective evidence-based stylistic criticism wherein interpretations of character-environment relationships are grounded in specific lexical-semantic qualities. Application of CA to *Sons and Lovers*, even within the representative limits provided, made possible a more intense understanding of how D.H. Lawrence grammatically constructs the intricate relations between his characters and the multi-faceted environments in which they exist. The method proved effective in pinpointing the exact semantic axes upon which Lawrence constructs resonance or dissonance, thereby offering an eminently traceable path to an understanding of his stylistic artistry in so doing. While the intrinsic reductiveness of binary features and the inevitable interpretive element involved in the ascription of these features are assumed to be a weakness of the method, the systematicity imposed by the model is a valuable service in avoiding the mere impressionistic reports of character-environment interaction. Overall, Leech's CA, used in a judicious manner and in conjunction with sensitive qualitative interpretation, turns out to be an efficient, albeit specialized, instrument in the stylistician's toolbox, most appropriately designed for examining the lexical organization supporting salient relational patterns in literary fictions.

Implications of the Study

The implications of this study are pertinent to several interrelated areas, which range from stylistic methodology to literary criticism and pedagogical practice. At a methodological level, this research highlights the potential to apply commonly accepted semantic tools, such as CA, to targeted stylistic analysis in large-scale literature. It highlights the value of mixed-method procedures to stylistics, whereby quantitative results emerging from systematic linguistic research can inform extensively, and conversely be supplemented by, close qualitative examination. The study offers a method of character-environment dynamics analysis that, whilst demonstrated here by means of Lawrence, could be applied and modified to other novels or novelists and thereby facilitate comparative stylistic study. It also draws attention to the ongoing necessity to put the assumptions and built-in limitations of analysandum models under close

inspection whenever they are being carried over from their home linguistic environments into the complex, often ambiguous domain of literary language.

Literary critical analysis, particularly of D.H. Lawrence's work, by CA, even if largely directed to methodological assessment as in this article, provides a higher degree of detail to his individual stylistic methods. It provides a sophisticated tool to empirically justify or critically examine current perceptions in terms of the psychological embeddedness or estrangement of his characters by introducing some lexical-semantic tendencies that establish these circumstances. This contributes to a better understanding of Lawrence's command of language in his description of the profound and often decisive impact of environment on human consciousness and relations.

Pedagogically, the feature-based, systematic method of analysis of descriptive language demonstrated in this study can be a valuable asset in the classroom instruction of literary analysis and stylistics. It may help students to become more sensitively attuned to the subtle manner in which writers use specific words to create character portraits and evoke settings, and to see how these elements of the text interact to create general meaning and thematic resonance. By making the process of semantic deconstruction more transparent, it can remove some of the mystique from literary interpretation and encourage a more rigorously analytical response to difficult texts. For future research, the paper not only suggests ways in which CA could be applied to examine other texts but also documents the importance of continuously refining linguistic models of this type in order to describe the full range of subtleties in literary expression, perhaps by investigating integrations of CA with research in cognitive stylistics or corpus-based research methods.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions to understanding the utility of CA in a literary stylistic context, this study is subject to several inherent limitations. Firstly, the foundational nature of CA, particularly Leech's (1981) binary model, involves a degree of semantic reductionism. The subtle richness of human emotion and the evocatively rich texture of literary prose must be economized as distinct [+/-] features in translation, which are bound to sacrifice some of their polysemy, vagueness, or connotational richness. The decisions involved in their selection and allocation, while guided by the model's maxims and a cautious respect for contextual sense, cannot help being a little subjective. This interpretive component can potentially influence the consistency and universal replicability of fine-grained feature lists generated by different analysts or across different analytical sessions. Second, the chief focus on lexical content words in the study means that other linguistic levels which incontrovertibly contribute to the general effect of character-habitat dynamics—such as elaborate syntactic structures, the omnipresent influence of figurative language beyond and above the simple lexical item, shifts of narrative voice, or the prosodic features intimated within dialogue—do not fall under explicit examination through the CA model applied here. These are significant but are beyond the immediate remit of this particular lexical-semantic model.

Third, the analysis here is dependent on inquiry into the selected “representative” quotations. Whilst that selection was conducted with strictness in order to illustrate the application of the model, it remains a sample exercise. Implementing the sort of minute micro-analytic technique to the whole of a novel like *Sons and Lovers* is beyond the bounds of one piece of research of this sort. The findings relating

to the model's performance are thus derived from a part of the text, however painstakingly chosen, which may not contain all subtlety or variation in Lawrence's characterization of character-habitat correspondence. Further, while quantification of 'logical compatibility' provides an indicative measure of semantic congruence, determination of what is 'logical' or 'congruent' in a literary work may be multifaceted and highly author-purpose and theme-dependent; a low figure, for instance, may reflect an effective and deliberate expression of alienation or dissonance rather than a style inconsistency. Finally, the focus of this article becomes paramount over the methodological assessment of CA and the resultant comprehensive literary interpretation of all character-habitat relationships throughout the entire range of *Sons and Lovers* is therefore beyond its immediate scope.

Delimitations of the Study

The focus of the study was specifically restricted to allow for a focused and manageable investigation. The research in this study is specifically restricted to the analysis of one particular novel, D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, but excluding comparative analysis with other literature, either by Lawrence or contemporaries. The dominant analytical tool employed is Leech's (1981) CA model; other semantic or stylistic models, although referred to within review of respective literature, are excluded from use within this research for comparative methodology evaluation. The analytic procedures are confined to the lexical level, targeting semantic characteristics of words of content, but not a systematic examination of syntactic structure, pragmatic functions, or discourse-level organization since they all play a role in the display of compatibility between character-habitat.

Secondly, the particular stylistic feature of concern is 'logical compatibility' between habitat and character, determined through measurement by the determination of congruence between their respective semantic features. Other potentially relevant aspects of character-place relation, such as the production of place as an ideological fact, the socio-cultural significance of settings, or the cognitive processes underlying a reader's perception of literary settings, fall outside the delimited range of semantico-stylistic patterning revealed through CA. The quantitative part of the investigation is based on feature frequencies from a reading of selected representative quotations and is intended to be used mainly to support a qualitative observation regarding the effectiveness and usefulness of the model, rather than trying to make definitive statistical inferences from the entire novel, something that would entail taking a more overarching corpus-based analysis approach. Finally, the study discusses the stylistic building of the author of this compatibility in the text, as opposed to reader-response theory or empirical studies of reader awareness of these processes.

Suggestions for Further Research

The conclusions reached and the limitations found in this study highlight several promising avenues of research in the discipline of stylistics and literary linguistics. Secondly, the framework provided here for CA to test character-habitat congruity may be applied systematically to a more diverse range of literary texts. Usage could then extend across different authors, genres (e.g., poetry, drama), and periods, so that comparisons are made worthwhile concerning in what ways this specific stylistic device is actualized across different literary modes and how well the CA model performs when it is faced with different linguistic complexities. Secondly, subsequent research could fruitfully explore combining Leech's CA with other complementary linguistic tools and techniques. As an illustration, blending corpus-based methodology for the statistical isolation of high-frequency lexical items or collocations associated with individual characters

or settings could provide items that are then subsequently examined more intensively and specifically by a CA technique, perhaps enhancing the representativeness and empirical robustness of the data.

Thirdly, the binary feature system at the heart of Leech's model is itself an area potentially open to refinement or extension in order to handle more efficiently the intrinsic nuances and complexities of literary language. Schönflies might investigate the potential of employing scalar features (which are capable of expressing degrees of a property, rather than +/-) or collaborate on developing feature sets more domain-tailored and suited to specific emotional climates or environmental archetypes that populate literary analysis. Conducting research that more completely assesses the inter-rater reliability of feature designation, possibly by way of larger analyst pools and more formal coding schemes, would also serve to provide added support to the method's objectivity claims. Another appropriate area of future study would be examining how CA of individual words interacts with higher-level linguistic properties, such as transitivity choices within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) or the pervasive use of figurative language (metaphor, metonymy), to formulate an enriched and multi-dimensional understanding of character-environment dynamics. Lastly, empirical research studies investigating actual readers' perception of character-habitat congruity and their correspondence with the linguistic features detected through CA may gain a useful complementary insight, actually filling the gap between textual stylistic analysis and cognitive or psycholinguistic approaches to literature.

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