

## INTERPRETATION OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S "SONNET 18" THROUGH SEMANTIC ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRAK

Puisi adalah jenis karya sastra di mana pengarangnya mengungkapkan perasaan dan pesannya terutama melalui bahasa. Puisi menggunakan kata-kata yang memiliki makna yang lebih dalam dan bernuansa selain makna literalnya. Hal ini terutama berlaku pada "Sonnet 18" karya William Shakespeare, di mana kata-kata tertentu mungkin sulit untuk ditafsirkan. Dengan demikian, tujuan penelitian ini adalah menerapkan analisis semantik yang berfokus pada makna leksikal dan makna gramatikal, untuk membantu pecinta puisi dalam memahami makna puisi. Kata-kata dari empat belas baris puisinya, yang mewakili derajat perhatian yang mendasar, menjadi data penelitian. Proses pengumpulan data melibatkan pembacaan setiap kata dengan suara keras beberapa kali. Metodologi penelitian deskriptif kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Pendekatan ini memungkinkan peneliti untuk mengeksplorasi dan memahami fenomena secara mendalam, mengeksplorasi makna, dan melihat kompleksitas subjek yang diteliti. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah puisi Soneta 18 karya William Shakespeare menceritakan ungkapan kekaguman yang ditunjukkan penyair terhadap seseorang yang disayangnya.

### ABSTRACT

*Poetry is a type of literary work in which the author expresses their feelings and message primarily through language. Poems employ words that have deeper, more nuanced meanings in addition to their literal ones. This is particularly true of William Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18," where certain words might be challenging to interpret. Thus, the purpose of this research is to apply semantic analysis, which focuses on lexical meaning and grammatical meaning, to assist poetry lovers in understanding the meaning of poetry. The words from fourteen lines of his poetry, which represent the fundamental degree of attention, serve as the research's data. The process of gathering data involves reading each word aloud several times. The descriptive qualitative research methodology was used in this study. This approach allows researchers to explore and understand phenomena in depth, explore meaning, and see the complexity of the subject under study. The result of this research is that the poetry Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare tells the expression of admiration shown by the poet to someone he adored.*

### INTRODUCTION

Poetry is a literary work that contains three important main elements. There are three main elements in poetry, namely first thoughts, ideas or emotions; the second is the shape; and the third is impression (Pradopo, 2009). If viewed from these three main elements, poetry is a literary work created through the creative ideas of the author or author and written with the aim of providing an impressive message to the reader and author.

Poetry often uses a unique language style and is full of figures of speech, such as metaphors, similes, personification, and so on. The use of this style of language makes the poetry richer and more

expressive, but it also makes it more difficult to understand literally. Poetry is the most distinctive and beautiful form of literature. Poetry uses language creatively to convey ideas, feelings, or experiences in an aesthetic and structured way. There can be various forms of poetry, from formal and structured ones such as sonnets, pantuns, or poems, to more free ones such as free poetry. The characteristics of poetry include the strong use of rhythm, rhyme, metaphor, symbols and similes to create an aesthetic experience for the reader or listener. Poetry often has deep layers of meaning and allows for problem solving with multiple interpretations. Therefore, understanding poetry is important in exploring and analyzing literary works.

Semantics is a language study or linguistic study that studies meaning or meaning in language (Chaer, 2002). Semantic analysis is the study of language meaning, including grammatical meaning (meaning formed from the arrangement of words or sentences) and lexical meaning (meaning of language elements as symbols of objects and events). Through semantic analysis, we can explore the deeper meaning of each stanza and line of poetry, as well as understand the relationship between the words, phrases and sentences used by the poet. Semantic analysis is important to understand the hidden meaning that the poet wants to convey through his poetry. Within the field of linguistics, semantics examines the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences within certain circumstances. The aim of this research is to study how semantic analysis can improve our understanding of poetry and open new doors in appreciating these literary works.

William Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18" is one of the most famous works of English poetry. This poetry is included in Shakespeare's series of sonnets, which describe love and eternity ("Sonnet 18," 2020). Through a semantic analysis of this poetry, we can explore how Shakespeare uses words and language structures to convey the themes of immortality, natural beauty, and eternal love. By paying attention to connotations, metaphors, and the context of word use, semantic analysis will help us understand the meaning hidden behind the beautiful words in this poetry. Apart from that, semantic analysis will also open up space to interpret the philosophical and emotional messages that Shakespeare wanted to convey to readers through his works.

In semantic analysis, this research will study how Shakespeare uses language and structure in "Sonnet 18" to communicate meaning and values related to love. This analysis will help understand how Shakespeare uses metaphor, symbolism, and poetic structure to depict love as eternal and universal beauty. Thus, it is hoped that this research can contribute to a deeper understanding of how Shakespeare uses language and structure in his works to communicate meaning and value, as well as how semantic analysis can be used to understand deeper and more complex literary works.

The Greek word "semainein," which meaning "meaningful," is where the word semantics originates. "Semaino" is the verb that means to mark or be meaningful, and "sema" is the noun that means sign or symbol. Semantics studies the meaning of language or semantics studies the meaning conveyed through language (Saeed, 2003). This limitation is necessary because meaning can be found everywhere. Many experts have tried to create definitions or limitations regarding semantics. From the semantic definitions put forward by several experts, some are the same, some are different. Semantics can be defined in three ways: (1) as the study of meaning; (2) as the science of meaning; and (3) as the study of language meaning. Semantics is a subfield of linguistics that focuses only on meaning examination.

Semantic analysis, along with phonology and grammar, is one of the three levels of language analysis, and its fundamental focus is the study of meaning or significance. This semantic analysis discusses how meaning is obtained and used in language, as well as how this meaning interacts with context and culture. Semantic analysis categorizes meaning into many meaning types, including connotative, non-referential, lexical, and referential meaning. These meaning categories are crucial to language use and communication.

Semantics is one of the three levels of language analysis, along with phonology and grammar, and it involves the study of meaning or significance. Semantics is the study of signs or symbols that convey meaning, the connections between meanings, and how these connections affect people and society. Semantics deals with the evolution and meaning of words (Tarigan, 1985). Semantics, then, is the science that investigates word meaning.

Meaning is a complex idea. Its complexity is reflected in an academic discipline that focuses on the study of these ideas. Philosophy, psychology, neurology, semiotics, and linguistics are mentioned as disciplines that display academic attention to meaning.

There are two components to every language sign: (1) what is interpreted, and (2) what interprets. The idea or meaning of a sound signal is the only thing that is understood (signified or signified). In the meantime, the sounds, which are derived from the language in question's phonemes, constitute the meaning (significant or signifier). Put differently, each and every linguistic sign is made up of both sound and meaning components. These two elements are elements in the language (intralingual)

which usually refer to a reference which is an element outside the language (extralingual).

The relationship between words and their meanings is arbitrary. This means that there is no mandatory relationship between the series of phonemes that make up a word and its meaning. However, everything is conventional. This means that it is agreed by every member of a language community to comply with that relationship, because if not, verbal communication will be hampered. Therefore, it can be said, there is a synchronic relationship between words and their meanings. The term meaning is confusing words and terms (Pateda, 2001). This meaning is always integrated into the utterance of words and sentences.

Differentiates meaning based on several criteria and points of view. Based on the semantic type, lexical meaning and grammatical meaning can be distinguished (Chaer, 2002). The meaning that results from grammar is known as grammatical meaning. Grammatical meaning in Indonesian refers to the core meaning of a word before it is modified by affixes, intonation shifts, word repetition, and other processes. Because sentence form plays a major role in grammatical meaning, grammatical meaning is also known as structural meaning.

The meaning that results from going through a grammatical or grammatical procedure is known as grammatical meaning. The meaning that results from the connections between more significant grammatical parts is known as grammatical meaning. Take the connection between morphemes in words, for instance. Grammatical meaning is the meaning that arises as a result of the function of words in a sentence (Hardiyanto, 2008). In addition, the meaning that results from grammatical events is sometimes referred to as grammatical meaning. Grammatical meaning can also emerge as a result of grammatical processes such as affixation, reduplication, and composition (Butar, 2021).

The real meaning of a word as it appears in a dictionary is known as its lexical meaning. The term "lexical" comes from the word "lexicon" which means dictionary. Lexical meaning is different from grammatical meaning, which depends on the sentence structure and grammatical processes. Lexical meaning has a fixed nature and does not depend on context, so it can be found in the dictionary as the original meaning of a word.

Lexical meaning, also known as semantic meaning, external meaning, or lexical meaning, is the meaning that is present in words that are on their own (separated from other words), whether in its basic, complicated, or derived forms. It is a reasonably stable meaning. as expressed. We consult the dictionary. The meaning that exists in our daily lives is lexical meaning. For example, the lexical meaning of the word rat is 'a type of borer that can cause typhus'. This meaning will be clear if the sentence 'my sister has a headache' has lexical meaning, but the sentence 'my head of office fired his employee' does not have lexical meaning. So it can be concluded that the lexical meaning of a word is a real description of the concept symbolized by that word.

Poetry is defined as being bound by: (1) the number of lines in each stanza (couplet/strofa, syllable); (2) many words in each line; (3) many syllables in each line; (4) rhyme; and (5) rhythm (Pradopo, 2009). However, as time goes by, Wirjosoedarmo's opinion is not suitable for defining poetry today.

Poetry is a dramatization of experiences that are interpretive (interpreting) in rhythmic language (bermetrum). Coleridge explained that poetry is the most beautiful words in the most beautiful arrangement. Carlyle said poetry is musical thought. Shelley argued that poetry is a record of the most beautiful moments in our lives. Pradopo concluded that poetry is an expression of thoughts that arouses feelings, which stimulates the imagination of the five senses in a rhythmic arrangement. Based on the opinions above, poetry can be concluded as a form of expressing feelings (the creator) through beautiful words (Pradopo, 2009).

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research method applied in this research is descriptive qualitative. This approach allows researchers to explore and understand phenomena in depth, explore meaning, and see the complexity of the subject under study. In the context of research into the poetry "Sonnet 18" by William Shakespeare, the use of qualitative descriptive methods allows researchers to approach this literary work in a holistic and comprehensive way.

The analytical method used is a descriptive qualitative method. This approach allows researchers to understand the meaning contained in the poetry through thorough reading and reflection, not just through numbers or statistics. Qualitative methods also allow researchers to explore the various possible interpretations associated with the poetry, as well as understand its impact in a wider context.

Overall, the use of qualitative descriptive methods in researching the poetry "Sonnet 18" allows researchers to gain a deep and holistic understanding of this literary work. This approach not only allows

them to identify specific elements in poetry, but also to understand the cultural, social, and historical context in which the poetry was produced, as well as its meaning and impact.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The result show that researchers find word which contain the lexical meaning and grammatical meaning in the poetry and presented it in the table below:

#### Poem stanza 1

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*

*Thou art more lovely and more temperate:*

*Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,*

*And summer's lease hath all too short a date;*

**Table 1.** Lexical meaning and grammatical meaning of poem stanza 1

WORD	LEXICAL MEANING	GRAMMATICAL MEANING
Shall	Modal verb indicating future action or intention	Auxillary verb
I	Pronoun referring to the speaker or writer	Subject pronoun
compare	To examine similarities and differences	Verb (base form)
thee	Archaic form of 'you' (object pronoun)	Object pronoun
to	Preposition indicating comparison or relation	Preposition
a	Indefinite article introducing a noun	Indefinite article
summer's	Possessive form of 'summer', referring to the season	Possessive noun
day	A period of 24 hours; here, representing a time of warmth and beauty	Noun
Thou	Archaic form of 'you' (subject pronoun)	Subject pronoun
art	Archaic form of 'are', second person singular present of 'be'	Verb (second person singular present)
more	Comparative form indicating a greater degree	Adverb
lovely	Attractive or beautiful	Adjective
and	Conjunction used to connect words or phrases	Coordinating conjunction
more	Comparative form indicating a greater degree	Adverb
temperate	Moderate or mild	Adjective
Rough	Having an uneven or irregular surface; harsh	Adjective
winds	Plural form of 'wind', moving air	Noun
do	Auxiliary verb indicating emphasis or affirmative	Auxiliary verb
shake	To move or cause to move back and forth or up and down with rapid, forceful movements	Verb (base form)
the	Definite article introducing a specific noun	Definite article
darling	Beloved or cherished	Adjective
buds	Plural form of 'bud', an undeveloped or embryonic shoot of a plant	Noun
of	Preposition indicating origin or association	Preposition
May	The fifth month of the year	Noun
And	Conjunction used to connect words or phrases	Coordinating conjunction
summer's	Possessive form of 'summer', referring to the season	Possessive noun
lease	A contract granting use or occupation for a specified period	Noun

hath	Archaic form of 'has', third person singular present of 'have'	Verb (third person singular present)
all	Entire amount or quantity	Adjective
too	To a higher degree than is desirable, permissible, or possible	Adverb
short	Measuring a small distance from end to end	Adjective
a	Indefinite article introducing a noun	Indefinite article
date	A particular day or year	Noun

## Poem stanza 2

*Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;*

**Table 2.** Lexical meaning and grammatical meaning of poem stanza 2

WORD	LEXICAL MEANING	GRAMMATICAL MEANING
Sometime	Occasionally, at some unspecified time	Adverb
too	To a higher degree than is desirable, permissible, or possible	Adverb
hot	Having a high temperature	Adjective
eye	The organ of sight; here, metaphorically refers to the sun	Noun
the	Definite article introducing a specific noun	Definite article
eye	The organ of sight; here, metaphorically refers to the sun	Noun
of	Preposition indicating relationship	Preposition
heaven	The sky or the universe, often considered the abode of gods	Noun
shines	Emits light	Verb (third person singular present)
And	Conjunction used to connect words or phrases	Coordinating conjunction
often	Frequently, many times	Adverb
is	Third person singular present of 'to be'	Verb (third person singular present)
his	Possessive pronoun referring to 'eye of heaven' (the sun)	Possessive pronoun
gold	A precious yellow metal; here, referring to the sun's appearance	Adjective
complexion	The natural color, texture, and appearance of a person's or object's skin or surface	Noun
dimm'd	Dimmed, made less bright	Verb (past participle)
And	Conjunction used to connect words or phrases	Coordinating conjunction
every	Each individual part of a group	Adjective
fair	Beautiful or attractive person or thing	Noun
from	Indicating a point of origin	Preposition
fair	Beautiful or attractive person or thing	Noun
sometime	Occasionally, at some unspecified time	Adverb
declines	Decreases, becomes less in strength or quality	Verb (third person singular present)
By	Indicates the means or agent performing the action	Preposition
chance	The occurrence of events without apparent cause	Noun
or	Conjunction used to link alternatives	Coordinating conjunction
nature's	Possessive form of 'nature', referring to the natural world	Possessive noun

changing	Undergoing change	Adjective
course	The path or direction taken	Noun
untrimm'd	Not trimmed, unaltered or unadjusted	Adjective (past participle)

### Poem stanza 3

*But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;  
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:*

**Table 3.** Lexical meaning and grammatical meaning of poem stanza 3

WORD	LEXICAL MEANING	GRAMMATICAL MEANING
But	Used to introduce a phrase or clause contrasting with what has already been mentioned	Coordinating conjunction
thy	Archaic form of 'your' (possessive pronoun)	Possessive pronoun
eternal	Lasting or existing forever	Adjective
summer	The warmest season of the year; here, metaphorically as a state of beauty or youth	Noun
shall	Modal verb indicating future action or intention	Auxiliary verb
not	Used to make a word or group of words negative	Adverb
fade	To gradually grow faint and disappear	Verb (base form)
Nor	Used to introduce a further negative statement	Coordinating conjunction
lose	To be deprived of or cease to have	Verb (base form)
possession	The state of having, owning, or controlling something	Noun
of	Preposition indicating relationship	Preposition
that	Used to identify a specific person or thing observed or heard by the speaker	Demonstrative pronoun
fair	Beautiful or attractive person or thing	Noun
thou	Archaic form of 'you' (subject pronoun)	Subject pronoun
ow'st	Archaic form of 'own' (possess, have)	Verb (second person singular present)
Nor	Used to introduce a further negative statement	Coordinating conjunction
shall	Modal verb indicating future action or intention	Auxiliary verb
death	The end of life	Noun
brag	To boast about something	Verb (base form)
thou	Archaic form of 'you' (subject pronoun)	Subject pronoun
wander'st	Archaic form of 'wander' (to move about aimlessly)	Verb (second person singular present)
in	Expressing the situation of something that is or appears to be enclosed or surrounded by something else	Preposition
his	Possessive pronoun referring to 'death'	Possessive pronoun
shade	Comparative darkness and coolness caused by shelter from direct sunlight	Noun
When	At or during the time that	Conjunction
in	Expressing the situation of something that is or appears to be enclosed or surrounded by something else	Preposition
eternal	Lasting or existing forever	Adjective
lines	Verses or phrases written in a poetic form	Noun
to	Expressing motion in the direction of	Preposition

time	The indefinite continued progress of existence and events	Noun
thou	Archaic form of 'you' (subject pronoun)	Subject pronoun
grow'st	Archaic form of 'grow' (to increase in size)	Verb (second person singular present)

#### Poem stanza 4

*So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,*

*So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

**Table 4.** Lexical meaning and grammatical meaning of poem stanza 4

WORD	LEXICAL MEANING	GRAMMATICAL MEANING
So	To such a great extent	Adverb
long	Measuring a great distance from end to end; here, referring to duration	Adjective
as	Used to indicate comparison or extent	Conjunction
men	Plural form of 'man'; human beings	Noun
can	Be able to; expressing ability	Modal verb
breathe	To take air into the lungs and then expel it, especially as a regular physiological process	Verb (base form)
or	Used to link alternatives	Coordinating conjunction
eyes	Plural form of 'eye'; organs of sight	Noun
can	Be able to; expressing ability	Modal verb
see	To perceive with the eyes	Verb (base form)
So	To such a great extent	Adverb
long	Measuring a great distance from end to end; here, referring to duration	Adjective
lives	Exists, continues in being	Verb (third person singular present)
this	Used to identify a specific person or thing close at hand or being indicated	Demonstrative pronoun
and	Conjunction used to connect words or phrases	Coordinating conjunction
this	Used to identify a specific person or thing close at hand or being indicated	Demonstrative pronoun
gives	Provides or supplies	Verb (third person singular present)
life	The existence of an individual human being or animal	Noun
to	Expressing motion in the direction of	Preposition
thee	Archaic form of 'you' (object pronoun)	Object pronoun

#### Discussion

The poetry by William Shakespeare, Sonnet 18, which is famous for its expressions of deep love and admiration. In this poem, Shakespeare uses beautiful and meaningful language to describe the eternity of beauty and love through the poem itself.

In the first line, "As long as men can breathe or eyes can see," words such as "men," "breathe," "eyes," and "see" have simple lexical meaning, Referring to humans, actions breathing, the organs of vision, and the act of seeing. Grammatically, these words function as subjects and verbs that make up sentences stating that as long as humans are alive and can see, this poetry will continue to live. The use of the word "so long" as an adverb also emphasizes the unlimited duration.

The second line, "Long live this, and it gives life to you," emphasizes the idea of immortality by using the words "life" and "give," which lexically mean continuation and giving. Grammatically, "this" as a demonstrative pronoun refers to the poem itself, which is described as being able to give eternal life to loved ones (thee). The combination of these words creates the meaning that as long as this poem exists, the beauty and love conveyed in it will also remain alive.

Shakespeare also uses rich grammatical structures with contrast and emphasis. The use of the word "nor" in the previous lines ("Nor loses possession of the fair that thou hast;") and "Nor will Death boast thee wandering under its shadow," shows a rejection of the idea that beauty and love can be lost

or die. Words like “shall” and “fade” as well as “brag” and “wander’st” suggest future actions that the poet rejects, depicting optimism and belief in immortality.

Overall, the lexical and grammatical analysis of each word in this poetry excerpt shows how Shakespeare carefully selected and arranged his words to create rich and deep meaning. Through contrast, emphasis, and the use of beautiful language, this poem not only praises beauty and love, but also emphasizes the eternal power of the literary work itself. This poem is proof that words have the power to immortalize feelings and beauty far beyond human life itself.

## CONCLUSION

In Shakespeare's Sonnet 18, the author begins by comparing the beloved to a summer's day, noting that the beloved is more lovely and temperate. The first stanza sets the stage by highlighting the imperfections of summer—rough winds shake the buds of May, and summer's duration is fleeting. The second stanza continues this theme, acknowledging that sometimes the sun (the "eye of heaven") shines too hot, and its golden complexion is often dimmed. Furthermore, all beautiful things eventually decline, either by chance or the inevitable changes of nature. However, the third stanza pivots to a more hopeful note, asserting that the beloved's "eternal summer" will not fade and that their beauty will not be lost. Death will not boast of having the beloved in his shade because the beloved will grow eternally in the lines of the poem. Finally, the poet concludes by affirming that as long as people live and can see, the poem will live on, immortalizing the beloved and giving life to their beauty for eternity.

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