

Diversification in the Use of the Word "One" in some Selected Literary Texts

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ABSTRACT

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KEYWORDS

Apart from its numeral meaning, one can have new indications by the contexts. The word "One" covers several shades of meaning. Selecting the appropriate sense of the word one is a problem. This paper is restricted to exploring the most famous indications of the word 'one' in some selected literary texts. It also confined to showing its semantic aspects in the chosen data. The research concludes that "one" may have either optimistic or pessimistic orientation relying on the contexts.

The Word "One", semantics,
expectations, literary texts

1. Introduction

Stobbe (1984, p.295) points out that the word "one" is very widespread in English. "One" is the preferable word widely shared in academic writing. The formality of "one" adds a sense of flavour to its use. In a more formal context, Eastwood (2002, p.23) states that "one" is employed to reflect "the upper- class speech".

1-One loves one's friends.

Similarly, Biber et al. (1999, pp.331, 353-5) confirm that "one appears mainly...in fiction and academic style".

Greenbaum (1996, p.173) remarks that "one" is seen as a substitutional pronoun to avoid repetition.

2-He reads this book and that one.

"One" can be the main subject of the sentence without previous reference (Greenbaum, *ibid*).

3- He can be alone as he is the only one allowed to answer this question.

As the case with other pronouns, Greenbaum (1996, p.171) says that "one" has a generic reference. "One" has the genitive form (one's) and the reflexive (oneself).

4- One should take care of oneself.

Alexander (1998, p.56), Leech and Svartvik (2002, p.263), and Eastwood (2002, p.237) agree that one is used to indicate "people in general, including the speaker".

5-One hopes that things will improve.

Quirk et al. (1985, p.770) mention that one is a "gender-neutral third person singular pronoun". The neutrality of "one" is in showing "no signs of gender specification".

6-One should choose one's friends carefully.

1. The Word "One" Syntactically

"One" is a number and indefinite pronoun. Numerically; it is enlisted within cardinal numbers. Leech; and Svartvik (2002, p.235) say that "one must be used with (100, 1000 and 10,000) when they are written with letter or spoken."

7-One in ten take drugs.

Leech and Svartvik (ibid.261) state that "one" can be used "as an indefinite determiner One (= an indefinite person)".

The difference between "one" and "a/ an" is that the former is used as a substitution for something specific, while the latter used to indicate something which is not explicit (Alexander, 1988, p.71).

8-You need a knife to cut this cake.

"One and a/an", as Alexander (ibid) remarks, are "used interchangeably when we refer to fraction, money, measure".

9-A (or one) dollar is not enough to buy this marker.

Swan (1995, p.175) mentions that one cannot be preceded by a/ an. However, they can co-occur once following an adjective.

10-I would like a big one.

To be chained with other words, Alexander (1988, p.71) states that one can be associated with "day, morning etc."

11- One day, many years later, I found out what had really happened.

By the same token, Leech and Svartvik (2002, p.263) point out that "one" can be associated with quantifiers as "every, each and any"

12-Each one of us could have made that mistake.

Alexander (1988, p.115) confirms that "generally there is no need for using one with neither ". The limitation is because the fact that neither structure does not need to use one.

The of -pattern can come after one (Alexander, ibid).

13-Either one of them

Idiomatically, one can related to another word producing new meanings (Eckersley, 1958:36)

14-There is one too many here.

"One" also, as Downing and Locke (2006, p.416) mention, can be accompanied by determiners, per-modifier and post-modifiers.

15-I need that one from the country.

To be used optionally, one can be omitted without harming the meaning of the sentence (Leech and Svartvik, 2002, p.247)

16-This exam is better than my last (one).

Concerning wh-cleft construction, it is preferable to use the phrase the one to highlight specific points (Downing and Locke, 2006, p.10)

17-The one John met was the man in the service station.

Alexander (1990, p.57) emphasizes that one co-occurs with (which +one) to support the meaning.

18-Which one do you prefer?

Alexander (ibid) adds that one followed by colour adjectives.

19-I will have the red one.

"One" must function as an object when it stands for the construction (a/ a +countable noun) (Alexander, 1988, p.90).

20 -Have a cup of tea? - I don't want one thank you.

"One" is also used with pointing words to showing the nearness or distance of someone or something. This structure occurs with the presence of the adverbs here or there (Alexander, 1988, p.91).

21-The book I am pointing to is that one here.

It is avoidable to use "ones" after "these, those" unless being followed by an adjective (Alexander, 1990, p.57).

22- I want these.

23- I like these red ones.

Having null meaning, "one" is a dummy subject, which means that it is a meaningless element. Empty "one" serves only grammatical purposes (Swan, 1995, p.133).

"One+ of whom" expresses a part quality (Greebaum, 1996, p.363).

24-There were two people, one of them was the thief.

One of constraints of using "one" is that it is not used interchangeably with non-countable nouns (Downing and Locke, 2006, p.405).

25-The news is good (the phrase *one news is ungrammatical).

With countable nouns, as Downing and Locke (2006, p.405) remark, "one" cannot be used since these "nouns are viewed as individuated things as *One beef".

Similarly, Brinton (2000, p.125) mentions that it is inappropriate to employ "one" instead of "the adjective which refers to an abstraction".

26-The known (*one)

Another restriction related to the use of "one" is that it is rarely used with possessive determiners in standard English, such as: "My one" (Downing and Locke, 2006, p.416).

2. Indications of the Word "One"

Semantically, the word "one" has other additional denotations behind the surface meaning. Linguists, such as Downing and Locke (2006), Alexander (1988), Eastwood (2000), Leech and Svartvik (2002) and Eckersley (1958), try to enlist the most common ones which are as follows:

1-Avoiding repetition: 27- I have this book and that one.

2-Showing contrast: 28 -One is here, and the other is not.

3-Prestige: 29-One has to say nothing concerning the current issue.

4- Excessively fancy: 30- One could not then in any way become a man skilled in all works.

5-Request: 31-Please pass me that white one.

6-Stating facts: 32-One cannot always do the right thing.

7- Expressing emotions: 33- One loves each other (Sotirova, 2014)

8- Emphasis: 34-This class has one whiteboard.

9- Empty: 35-one can do nothing about it.

10- Highlighting some points: 36-The one David saw was the boy in the school.

11- Choice: 37- Why, may one ask?

2. Methodology

Depending on the forgoing theoretical presentation, the model adopted for analyzing the following selected texts based on other models, such as Sotirova(2014), Downing and Locke, 2006), Alexander (1988), Eastwood (2000), Leech and Svartvik (2002) and Eckersley (1958). They highlight the meaning of the word "one", in addition to the observations made by the researcher herself. The eclectic model used to analyse the present study illustrates the semantic functions of the "one".

1. Data Analysis

Text-1

"She looked up at him, with her dark eyes one flame of love." (Sons and Lovers)

The word "one" portrays the feeling of love. Paul and Miriam are in love. There is a mutual relation between them. Here; the word "one" implies their union and having opinions in common.

Text-2

"With loss of Eden, till one greater Man Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat, Sing Heav'nly" (Paradise Lost)

To balance anxiety and salvation, Milton affirms that Christ is the only symbol of redemption. "One" stands for the urgent need and the only hope in this life. Being sinful makes one feel panic. Thus; Christ sacrifices himself so as not to be lost. Following the redeemer's footsteps, the lost paradise can regain. The word "one" carries the feeling of specification and holiness compatible with eagerness and hope.

Text-3

"One chest contains my hope of happiness. Ruined if the wrong man chooses it" (The Merchant of Venice)

Portia feels upset by suitors who come from all around the world. She is afraid that if one of them may choose correctly. Thus, she will lose her beloved Bassanio. Despite being a way, Portia confesses that her heart beats only for Bassanio.

As a light shining the dark corner of her life, Portia utters the word "one" to confirm that she is in love with Bassanio."One", here, implies their union. Portia wants to mirror their harmony using the word "one". They are different bodies in one soul.

In this text, the word "one" refers to intimacy compatible with happiness. Portia has only one beloved, one choice and one dream. Portia's ultimate wish represented by selecting her soul mate the appropriate box. Here; "one" stands for a flicker of hope.

Text-4

"'Lor!' cried Ann, suddenly, 'see that one!' " (Kipps - The Story of a Simple Soul)

As a promise of their love, Ann mentions the word "one", emphasizing that they are in harmony and close relationship. "One" is also a foreshadowing of what may happen in future.

Love knows no boundaries or social differences. Here; "one" indicates the flame of love between Ann and Kipps, which kept at any expense. "One" also embodies love which knows no barriers or social differences.

Text-5

"You are the king no doubt, but in one respect." (Sophocles - Oedipus the King)

As a fortune-teller, Tiresias hint at Oedipus' miserable destiny. He states that they are parallel in status. Blindness takes place when one cannot see the truth; the word "one" has a negative indication. "One" figures out that there is no place for comparison. "One" also stands for Tiresias' superiority over Oedipus. Tiresias' knowledge exceeds the limits. The word "one" signifies man's struggle with his fate. Oedipus is in lost

Text-6

"Let me get four fresh ones." 'One,' " (The Old Man and the Sea)

Optimistically, Santiago utters the word "one", emphasizing that there is still an opportunity in life. "One "is not just a number; it is an inspiration. It gives rise to hope and comfort.

With persistence and determination, Santiago never loses hope. He instils patience in others by employing the word "one", which means looking forward with great expectations.

Text-7

" Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:

One must be so careful these days...' " (The Waste Land By T. S. Eliot)

The general word "one" employed to take into consideration what may happen in future and arise a sense of oddness. Eliot wants to warn his readers depending on the fortune-teller's predictions. Eliot's citation of the prophetic insights ensure the loss of comfort. "One" gives rise to the sense of meditation compatible with fear and anxiety. It is also closely related to the lack of peacefulness.

Text-8

" One day, is that not enough for you, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you?" (Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett)

In this particular text, "one" signifies emptiness, its useless highlights the meaningless of life. "One" manipulates the cycle of life pessimistically. The sense of alienation echoes deeply once repeating the word "one".

Living in chaos has been summarized in pronouncing "one" frequently. "One" includes all the negativity of human existence from beginning to the end. Life is only a matter of course, one should face his decisive fate sooner or later. "One" conceptualises painful timelessness, everything has been marginalized in this speech.

Text-9

"Pearl, I hear a footstep along the path, and the noise of one putting aside the branches." (The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne)

Hester Prynne describes the coming of the clergyman as an indefinite person. "One" shows her upset about such attendance. Hester Prynne substitutes the name of her partner, Dimmesdale. Here; "one" is as a way of expressing her dissatisfaction. "One" stands for Dimmesdale, who is shadow of grief and a source of pain.

"One" reflects the gloomy face of her life. "One" is also his hesitation and fear as well. His lack of confidence makes him nothing in Hester's eyes. His coming and his attendance makes no difference. Both mean the same to her. Hester Prynne hopes to have his actual existence; however, he is not. Hester Prynne renders her sympathy and bothers by uttering the "one" intentionally.

Text-10

"As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,

Give me one poor request" (Hamlet by Shakespeare)

Politely, Hamlet asks for a request to keep the secret. Horatio is the one whom Hamlet trusts. "One" is not just a number, however; it has a deep meaning (i.e. discovering the truth).

The main reason for using "one" in this particular text is giving a chance to recognize the murderer of Hamlet's father. Hamlet longs for an opportunity to comfort himself and solace it. Horatio represents hope in Hamlet's life. He is the sole person on whom he can rely.

Text-11

"One thing, good servant, let me crave of thee,

To glut the longing of my heart's desire,

That I may have unto my paramour

That heavenly Helen which I saw of late" (Doctor Faustus by Marlowe)

This current text shows the way of buying one's life for nothing. Doctor Faustus insists on practising black magic. Doctor Faustus never feels regret, he is eager to see more and more. Doctor Faustus lives in a false pleasure, such happiness is superficial, which lasts for a short time. Dr. Faustus wants rail against the limits of human knowledge.

The word "one" stands for his demonic orientation. Laws of black magic prevent Doctor Faustus to have a wife. "One" portrays the non-existence world and Doctor Faustus ' degradation.

3. Conclusion

Away from its numerical meaning, "one" can have other additional denotations such as loss, intimacy, chaos and solace.

It found that "one" is informative and adds an extra shade of meaning. "One" used as an expectation of the future as a good or bad omen and as is a way of warning. It also concluded that the word "one" is associated with positive indications such as hope, comfort, love and satisfaction.

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