

**Multiple connotations of a single word in its sentence:
Japanese Waka “Tatsuta River (Tatsuta Gawa)” As an Example**

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Abstract:

Nowadays, it is commonly known that a single word has only one connotation, and that it may have many connotations that differ due to context as/ or other factors, but, in all cases, only one connotation is applied to a given word in its specific context in its sentence.

In addition, it is commonly known that connotations differ due to cultures and their characteristics. For example, a single color in a specific culture may refer to a specific connotation (or to multiple connotations that differ every time due to context and/ or other factors).

Well, can it be imagined a single word/ color having two connotations in the same wording and the same sentence? Can cases be imagined where mentioned connotations are totally opposite to each other?

This is the point that the researcher proves in this paper, using the word/ color “crimson” that appears in a Japanese Waka named "Tatsuta River". Mentioned Waka appears in three famous Japanese literature works. A quick comparison to the same word/ color in Arabic poem (Poems of Arab diaspora in Spain) is also included (Just to compare Arabic and Japanese examples, it is not needed for proving mentioned fact).

Keywords: Connotations, Word, Context, Crimson, Tatsuta, Waka.

List of Terms:

1. Diwān: A book of poems` collection.
2. Mu'allaqat: Pre-Islamic large and the most famous poems.
3. Waka: A genre of Japanese poetry.
4. Manyōshū: The Man'yōshū (万葉集, literally "Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves") is the oldest extant collection of Japanese waka (poetry in Classical Japanese).

1) The case of crimson color in Arabic modern poetry:

Here I show a poem of Mahmoud Sobh, an Arab diaspora poet in Spain. This piece of poem is included in his diwān (A book of poems` collection) named Athnā (Translation: During). (Dated: 1971/8/20, Madrid).

...ولست بقارئ
قرأت بعينيك حلم الشواطئ
وكنا ننام بقاع البحور
تلمظت طعم الرماد الأخير
وخفت حريق شفاء الموائ
...ولست بقارئ
شعرت بأن شتاءك دافئ
وأن بليلك وحي العبير
وأنتك تخفين تحت الحرير
لآلى سودا وأحمر قاني
...ولست بقارئ
دعيني أنام وأصبح هادي
...ولست بقارئ¹

¹ ديوان قبل أثناء بعد-محمود صبح المهجر الأسباني-جمع وشرح وتعليق د. أحمد يوسف خليفة (بكلية الآداب/ جامعة جنوب الوادي) -الناشر: دار الوفاء
لدنيا الطباعة والنشر بالإسكندرية. رقم الإيداع: 9773271214.

In the text above, the underlined word (Translation: crimson color) has connection with beautifulness and luxury as being related to pearls; thus, this is a positive connotation. Here, mentioned word has only one meaning and one connotation. However, such positive connotation is uncommon in Arab diaspora's poetry where red color is found everywhere while referring to "lots of blood of war"². This is considered a negative connotation. I think this is because crimson is different to red as being a shade of it. This is like the case of multiple shades of black color in Arab culture where each shade has its own name and purpose (I will explain this later).

The following Japanese master thesis may be useful for those need knowing further details concerning connotations of words and colors.

『アラブにおける日アラ・アラ日翻訳問題：その解決を探る研究』

(Translation problems between Japanese & Arabic in both directions for Arabs: Suggested Solutions)

A book version is also available (ISBN: 978-613-8-24764-7, Publisher: Globe Edit).

2) An example of multiple connotations of a single color in the same culture (Arab culture "Arabic poems and The Holy Quran" as an example)

In Arabic poetry, there are many connotations for black color that differ due to environment, conditions and context. These differ completely and there are cases where these are found to be opposite. However, a single word here has only one meaning and one connotation.

Arabs recognized multiple color shades for the color named "Black" and assigned a separate name for each shade. This is detailingly explained in an Arabic master thesis named: "Connotations of Colors in Nizar Qabbani's Poetry", Ahmed Abdalla Mohammad Hamdan, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine, 2008. Original Arabic title: "دلالات الألوان في شعر نزار قباني". Mentioned thesis gives poetic and Quranic examples as well. Details can be found in pages 32-38 of mentioned thesis.

In brief, black color is known to Arabs being opposite to beautifulness in most cases, while being a lovely color of hair, eyes, gingivae and lips in love poetry (of Mu'allaqat "pre-Islamic large and the most famous poems" and other poems of Arabs). This is mentioned in page 32 of mentioned thesis.

² دراسات في شعر الخطاب السياسي الأندلسي عصر الرابطين والموحدين وبنو الأحمر، محمود شاكر الجنابي، الناشر: المنهل، تاريخ النشر: 2013. رقم الإيداع: 9796500126715.

3) Crimson color in Japanese Waka as an example of multiple connotations of the same word in its sentence

Below, I will show a Japanese Waka that appears in Ogura Hyakunin Isshu, Kokin Wakashū and The Tales of Ise.

「千早ぶる神世も聞かず竜田川からくれなゐに水くくるとは」
在原業平朝臣「古今和歌集」（巻 5）秋下 294／小倉百人一首・17 番

According to my explanation of the abovementioned Waka (The 4th reference in the table of Arabic references)³, crimson color (からくれなゐ) has a positive connotation as its seen meaning says Sakura flowers fall down to Tatsuta River/ reflect on Tatsuta River's water causing it to be totally coloured. This is considered a wonderful image of autumn.

However, there is also a hidden meaning and its separate (and different) connotation. According to the same reference, Ariwara No Narihira Ason said this poem to the empress during a poetry night. The empress was his lover before getting married to the emperor, and she asked him to say a piece of poem. The abovementioned piece of poem was his reply to her. This reply has a hidden meaning that only both lovers know, which is him hoping to throw himself into the river, an action of suicide that results in river's water turning to crimson. This is a negative image of blood and suicide, so, this is a hidden connotation of the hidden meaning, and it is opposite to the positive connotation carried by the seen meaning.

In summary, I proved that a single word “crimson” has two opposite connotations in the same sentence at the same time. In addition, I mentioned the reason of this, which is the existence of a hidden and unseen context.

It is totally known and confirmed that Manyōshū has lots of similar cases as its love poems have unseen love context that is the real intended meaning. These poems have a seen meaning that is very different to the hidden and intended meaning that the poem was created for. This includes speaker poems and replier poems.

Below, I will mention one more example that is cited from my translation of Haru Suigite poem (The spring goes away) “available on my Sound Cloud channel (The 5th reference in the table of Arabic references)”⁴.

「春山は散り過ぎぬとも三輪山は未だ含めり君待ちかてに」
(万葉仮名〈原文〉：春山者 散過去 三輪山者 未含 君待勝尔)
万葉集巻9-1684 柿本人麻呂

³ عرض تحليلي موجز لقصيدة 千早ぶる للشاعر أري وارا نو ناريهيرا أسون، الباحث أشرف الكريدي، أغسطس 2018. رقم DOI: 10.131.40/RG.2.2.15351.06564

⁴ الترجمة الصوتية والنصية لقصيدة 春山は散りすぎぬとも للباحث أشرف الكريدي على قناته بموقع ساوند كلاود.

URL: <https://soundcloud.com/ashraf21c/d6q9segeurup?in=ashraf21c/sets/js2lb17xudzk>

The abovementioned piece of Manyōshū reflects beauty of spring nature, while, in fact, it has a hidden context of its creator inviting her lover to deflowering her as the word “closed (未だ含めり/未含)” actually refers to hymen, NOT to flowers.

Clearly, this is another case where I prove a single word “Closed” has two connotations in the same sentence at the same time. In addition, I mentioned the reason of this, which is the existence of a hidden and unseen context.

In conclusion, I proved the following:

- Possibility of existence of multiple meanings and connotations of a single word in its specific sentence at the same time. In addition, I analysed this and found this happening because of a hidden context.
- Possibility of multiple meanings and connotations of a single word (in its specific sentence) being completely opposite to each other. This is a totally new case and is very different to previously mentioned case of black color`s in Arab culture where, in overall, is known to be opposite to beautifulness in most cases, while being a lovely color of hair, eyes, gingivae and lips in love poetry (of Mu'allaqat "pre-Islamic large and the most famous poems" and other poems of Arabs). In addition, I found that mentioned opposition of connotations (and meanings) is caused by a hidden and unseen context.

Table of References:

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URL: <https://soundcloud.com/ashraf21c/d6q9segeurup?in=ashraf21c/sets/js2lb17xudzk>

B. Japanese References:

Note: These are ones used by abovementioned reference(s).

1. 万葉集 (巻9)。
2. 古今和歌集 (巻 5) 秋下。
3. 小倉百人一首。