



Semantic Fields and Human Nature Relations in Pre-Islamic Poetry: A Semantic-Ecocritical Reading of *Diwan As-Syanfara*

الحقول الدلالية وعلاقتها بالطبيعة البشرية في الشعر الجاهلي: قراءة دلالية-بيئية نقدية لديوان الشنفرى

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the semantic field and human nature relations in pre-Islamic poetry through a semantic-ecocritical study of the *Diwan As-Syanfara*. This study uses a qualitative-descriptive method with an integrated semantic approach, employing John Lyons' semantic field analysis theory to map the lexical relationships between word elements, and an ecocritical approach (from the perspective of Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell) to examine how human-nature relations are represented in the ecological context of the desert in pre-Islamic Arabia. The results show that the semantic field in this diwan is divided into: (1) the "field of fauna" that establishes the hierarchy of life; (2) the "field of death" that demonstrates the naturalness of destruction; (3) the "field of movement" which affirms dynamic existential; (4) the "field of the body" which presents the materiality of existence; and (5) the "field of the desert landscape" which becomes the total domain that encompasses everything. The ecological relationship between humans and natures in the text is not merely decorative, but rather relational and structural, where the biological nature of animals is projected into the formation of the subject's identity in the poem. This research contributes to the development of semantic studies of classical Arabic literature using modern theory, by expanding it into the perspective of modern semantics and ecocriticism.

Keywords: Semantic Fields, Human Nature Relations, Semantic-Ecocritical Study, *Diwan As-Syanfara*.

مستخلص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل بنية الحقل الدلالي العام والعلاقات البيئية في الشعر الجاهلي من خلال دراسة دلالية-بيئية نقدية لديوان الشنفرى. وتعتمد الدراسة المنهج الوصفي النوعي مع مقارنة دلالية متكاملة، موظفةً نظرية "تحليل الحقل الدلالي" لجون ليونز لرسم خريطة العلاقات المعجمية بين العناصر اللفظية. والمقاربة البيئية النقدية (من منظور شيريل غلوتفيلتي ولورانس بويل) لفحص كيفية تمثيل العلاقة بين الإنسان والطبيعة في السياق البيئي للصحراء في الجزيرة العربية قبل الإسلام. وتُظهر النتائج أن الحقل الدلالي العام في هذا الديوان ينقسم إلى: (١) "حقل الكائنات الحية" الذي يرسخ تراتبية الحياة؛ (٢) "حقل الموت" الذي يبرز الطبيعة الحتمية للفناء؛ (٣) "حقل الحركة" الذي يؤكد على الوجود الديناميكي؛ (٤) "حقل الجسد" الذي يجسد مادية الوجود؛ و(٥) "حقل المشهد الصحراوي" الذي يشكل النطاق الشامل المحتوي لكل ما سبق. ولا تقتصر العلاقة البيئية بين الإنسان والطبيعة في النص على الجانب الزخرفي، بل هي علاقة بنيوية وتفاعلية، حيث تنعكس الطبيعة البيولوجية للحيوانات على تشكيل هوية الذات في القصيدة. ويساهم هذا البحث في تطوير الدراسات الدلالية للأدب العربي الكلاسيكي عبر توظيف النظريات الحديثة، وذلك من خلال توسيع نطاقها لتشمل منظورات علم الدلالة الحديث والنقد البيئي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: حقل المعنى، العلاقات الإيكولوجية، دراسة دلالية-إيكولوجية نقدية، ديوان الشنفرى.

Citation:

Darlin, M. Z., Astari, R., & Nuriyah. (2026). Semantic Fields and Human Nature Relations in Pre-Islamic Poetry: A Semantic-Ecocritical Reading of *Diwan As-Syanfara*. *Al-Muyassar: Journal of Arabic Education*, 5 (3): 673–695.

INTRODUCTION

Pre-Islamic poetry (*Jahiliyah*) is one of the primary sources for understanding the conceptual structure of Arab society in the early pre-Islamic period, particularly in its relationship to the desert environment (Barqi, 2025). The Jahiliyah poetry corpus also reveals that the representation of various lexemes used in these poems serves not merely as rhetorical ornamentation, but as a conceptual device that constructs the poem's general system of meaning (Yeibo, 2011).

Arabic poetry about nature is not new, but has existed since pre-Islamic times. Arab poets recited their poems aloud to crowds at public events and fairs. These poems are renowned for their eloquence and complexity. For Arab poets, nature in poetry meant depicting all aspects of the universe, from trees and mountains to day and night, rivers, and springs. Each Arab poet of *Jahiliyah* had his own way of addressing these phenomena, each with its own distinctive literary characteristics and signature. Nature became an inseparable part of their lives, as descriptions of nature transcended their joys and sorrows, and served as a refuge for them to vent their worries and joys (Bader Al Bataineh & Abuhammam, 2024).

Historically, *As-Syanfara* was one of the *Sa'alik* (singular *Sa'luk*) group of poets, wandering poets in pre-Islamic Arabia who roamed the desert and lived in seclusion. Separated from the security and structure of their tribe, they faced the hardships of their arid environment and composed poetry that immortalized their lifestyle as a steadfast independence that deviated from social norms (Saidel, 2023). Not only was this community of pre-Islamic Arabia known for its isolation from social life, but it was also known for its frequent harm to the surrounding community.

This occurred because they felt they didn't fit into the Arab lifestyle of the time, caused by economic inequality, the social strata of serfdom, unclear ancestry, and even skin color and physical disabilities that led to discrimination in society. As is known, the origin of the name "*As-Syanfara*" means a person with two large lips (Al Halabi, Yahya Saleh Hasan Dahami, 2020). *As-Syanfara* and the other *Sa'alik* poets felt discriminated against by the social system of the time, which marginalized them because of their shortcomings. This led to a desire to combat social discrimination by extreme means, such as robbing the wealth brought by wealthy merchants passing through the desert areas they controlled. The goal was to redistribute it to the marginalized lower classes.

As-Syanfara and other *Sa'alik* poets chose to live in the vast desert because they felt that the nature and wild animals in the desert were more suitable for them than living in the big cities which were very harsh, stressful and unfriendly at that time (Yeibo, 2011). Therefore, we can find many mentions of the lexemes of the wild nature, fauna, life, death that describe their struggle, sadness and social resistance. This is seen significantly in *Diwan As-Syanfara* for example, which presents lexemes such as eagles, wolves, horses, camels, and desert birds, not only as an integral part of the poet's identity construction, but also shows the relationship between humans and nature at that time. Not only fauna lexemes, other lexemes such as the death lexeme, which symbolizes despair and loss of hope, movement lexemes that signify the necessity to keep fighting, body lexemes that symbolize the desire to survive, to the imagery of the desert landscape that reflects the harshness of *Sa'alik*'s life will be the focus of this study.

So far, studies of lexemes in pre-Islamic poetry have tended to be limited to stylistic aspects or individual symbolism, and have not yet placed them within the framework of the semantic field, let alone systematically integrating it with human nature relations. In the last decade, previous studies using semantic and ecolinguistic approaches have experienced significant development. Studies on fields of meaning show that vocabulary within a domain forms a relational system that reflects the conceptual structure of culture (Evans, 2019). In the environmental context, research of (Hakim, Hasibuan, & Purwaningsih, 2024) confirms that ecological lexicons in regional languages reflect how communities understand their ecosystems. Similarly, research of (Kaxramon kizi, 2025) shows that modern ecological terms form interconnected fields of meaning that reflect contemporary environmental awareness. These findings strengthen the assumption that fields of meaning in classical texts can also be read as a complete ecological conceptual system.

On the other hand, ecocritical and ecolinguistic approaches position language as a medium for shaping ecological reality. (Garrard, 2019) asserts that representations of nature in literary texts are not merely passive reflections, but ideological constructions that shape human relations with the environment. (Zapf, 2016) even views literature as a "cultural ecology" that mediates the relationship between humans and the non-human world. In the realm of linguistics, (Stibbe, 2021) expands this approach through ecolinguistics, examining how language choices influence ecological perceptions. Studies (Agbeleoba, Orebe, & Adekunle-Ojo, 2025) also show that the language structure of environmental discourse fosters a specific ecocentric orientation.

However, these studies generally focus on modern discourse, educational texts, or discourses on sustainable development (Putra, 2023). Studies of classical texts within an ecocentric semantic framework, particularly pre-Islamic poetry, remain relatively limited. Research on classical Arabic literature often prioritizes traditional philological, historical, or stylistic aspects. Thus, there is a gap in research that integrates the theory of semantic fields structures with an ecological relationship to interpret the conceptual structure of human natures in *Jahiliyah* poetry.

Theoretically, this research is based on the Semantic Field Theory, which states that the meaning of a lexeme is determined by its position within a relational system (Cruse, *Meaning in language: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics* (3rd ed.), 2011). Historically, Semantic Field Theory is rooted in early 20th-century European structural semantics (Trier), developed through a relational approach (Lyons), and then enriched with cognitive dimensions (Geeraerts). Meanwhile, the ecocentric approach emerged from the late 20th-century ecocritical movement (Garrard) and expanded into the linguistic realm through ecolinguistics (Stibbe), specifically using the ecocritical perspectives of Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell. The combination of these two traditions allows for an analysis of the lexical semantic field as well as an interpretation of human nature relations in pre-Islamic poetry, particularly the poem *As-Syanfara*.

Therefore, the main research questions raised in this study are:

1. How is the semantic fields in the *As-Syanfara* poem constructed lexically?
2. How do these semantic fields represent the ecological relationship between humans and nature in the cultural context of Arab desert societies in the pre-Islamic period?

This question is important because the vocabulary in the poetic text is not a separate element, but rather forms an organized semantic network. Without a systemic approach, the analysis of the imagery of nature and animals and the mention of these diverse lexemes risks being fragmented and losing its ecological dimension.

The scope of this research is limited to the stanzas of the *ghinaiy* poem on the first 46 pages, consisting of five *qasidahs* with different *qafiyahs* (starting from *Qafiyah Ba'*, *Qafiyah Ta'*, *Qafiyah Jim*, *Qafiyah Dal*, and *Qafiyah Ro'*) in *Diwan As-Syanfara* (Yaqoub, 1996). This is because the authors observe that in these *qasidahs*, the poet is more powerful in interpreting nature and the ecological relationship between humans and their environment than in his other *qasidahs*.

The urgency of this research lies in two aspects. First, theoretically, this research expands the application of the theory of fields of meaning in the study of classical Arabic literature. Second, conceptually, this research demonstrates that pre-Islamic poetry represented the complex ecological relationships between humans, nature, and desert fauna. In the context of nomadic societies, animals are not merely symbolic objects, but ecological partners that determine mobility, survival, and social structure.

By combining structural semantics and an ecocentric approach, this study aims to analyze the semantic fields and human nature relations in pre-Islamic poetry through a semantic-ecocritical study of the *Diwan As-Syanfara*. The semantic fields demonstrate that the relationship between humans and animals is coexistent, competitive, and symbolic. Therefore, this study confirms that a semantic-ecocentric reading of pre-Islamic poetry can open new perspectives in understanding early Arab society's conceptual construction of nature.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate the structure of semantic fields and human nature relations represented in *Diwan As-Syanfara*. The study combined John Lyons' semantic field theory with the ecocritical perspectives of Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell. Through this integrated framework, the research examined how lexical units form interconnected semantic networks and how these networks reflect the ecological relationship between humans, fauna, and the desert environment in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry.

The primary data source was *Diwan As-Syanfara* edited by Emil Badi Yaqub (1996). The corpus analyzed in this study was limited to the first forty-six pages of the diwan, particularly the five qasidahs with different qafiyahs, namely Qafiyah Ba', Qafiyah Ta', Qafiyah Jim, Qafiyah Dal, and Qafiyah Ra'. These poems were selected because they contain a significant concentration of lexical items related to fauna, death, movement, the body, and desert landscapes, which are relevant to the objectives of this research.

Data were collected through documentation and close-reading techniques. The authors carefully read the selected qasidahs and identified lexical units associated with ecological elements, including animals, bodily parts, movement, death, and landscape features. The identified lexemes were then inventoried, classified, and grouped according to their semantic relations and conceptual domains. Relevant poetic excerpts

containing these lexemes were recorded to facilitate contextual interpretation.

The data were analyzed using an interactive semantic-ecocritical procedure. First, the collected lexemes were classified into semantic fields based on paradigmatic relations, hyponymy, lexical opposition, and componential features following Lyons' semantic field theory. This stage aimed to reveal the internal semantic fields operating within the text. Subsequently, the resulting semantic fields were interpreted using the ecocritical perspectives of Glotfelty and Buell to examine the representation of ecological relationships between humans and the non-human environment. The analysis focused on identifying patterns of ecological awareness, environmental imagination, and the relational position of humans within the desert ecosystem. The findings were then synthesized to explain how the semantic organization of the text constructs an ecocentric worldview in Diwan As-Syanfara.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis conducted in this study is based on a theoretical framework that enables the examination of both linguistic structures and ecological representations within the text. As the research seeks to uncover how lexical items are organized into meaningful patterns and how these patterns reflect the relationship between humans and their environment, it employs two complementary theoretical perspectives. The following sections outline the principal concepts and analytical assumptions of Semantic Field Theory and Ecocriticism that guide the interpretation of the data.

A. Theoretical Basis of Semantic Field Theory

1. Basic Concept of Semantic Field Theory

Semantic field theory is an approach in structural semantics that views a language's vocabulary as a system organized within a relational network (Boran, 2018). The meaning of a lexeme does not stand alone but is determined by its position within a broader lexical system (Lyons, 1977). In this view, language represents reality through systematic conceptual segmentation, so that each word acquires its meaning through paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations with other words in the same domain.

The concept of the semantic field was first formulated by Trier, who stated that a language's vocabulary is structured into "fields of meaning" (Wortfeld) that reflect the conceptual structure of its speaking community. This idea was later developed in modern semantics through componential analysis and structural approaches (Cruse, *Meaning in language: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics*, 2011) (Lehrer, 1974). In contemporary developments, the field of meaning is understood not only as a

linguistic phenomenon but also as a cultural conceptual system that reflects how a community understands the world (Evans, 2019).

2. Internal Structure of Semantic Field Theory

The fields of meaning (Semantic Field) theory emphasizes that vocabulary within a domain has a relational structure that can be analyzed using several key principles:

a. Paradigmatic Relations

Paradigmatic relations are substitutional relationships between lexemes within a single meaning category. In the fauna domain, for example, lexemes such as eagle, horse, camel, and desert bird are all within the same conceptual field but are distinguished by specific semantic features (Cruse, *Meaning in language: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics* (3rd ed.), 2011). These relations allow for comparative analysis of meaning within an organized system.

b. Componential Analysis

Componential analysis breaks down meaning into distinctive features. This approach helps identify differences and similarities in meaning between lexemes within a domain (Lyons, 1977). This approach remains relevant in contemporary semantic studies, especially when combined with cognitive and cultural perspectives (Evans, 2019).

c. Hierarchical Structure and Hyponymy

Semantic fields are hierarchical. Common lexemes such as "fauna" function as hypernyms that encompass hyponyms such as "bird," "wild animal," or "riding animal." This structure demonstrates the hierarchical and interconnected nature of meaning within the conceptual system of language (Cruse, *Meaning in language: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics* (3rd ed.), 2011).

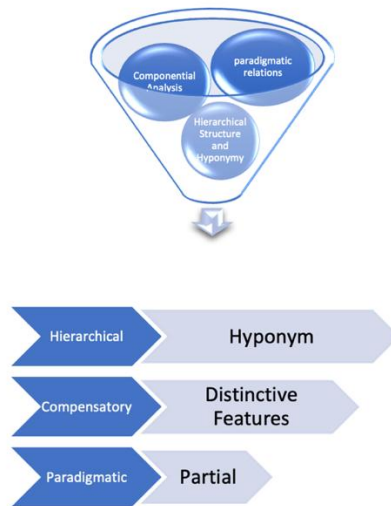


Image 1. Internal Structure of the Semantic Field

3. Fields of Meaning as Conceptual Representations of Culture

From a modern linguistic perspective, semantic field not only describe the relationships between lexemes but also reflect how a culture organizes experience and reality (Evans, 2019). Therefore, the vocabulary in a literary text can reflect the conceptual structure of a particular society.

In the context of pre-Islamic poetry, the dominance of the desert fauna lexicon, for example, may indicate that the conceptual system of early Arab society was closely tied to its ecological environment. This aligns with ecolinguistic studies, which emphasize that language reflects the relationship between humans and their environment (Stibbe, 2021). Thus, fields of meaning are not only linguistic but also ecological.

Recent research in literary ecocriticism shows that the representation of animals in texts is not merely rhetorical ornamentation but part of the construction of human-nature relations (Garrard, 2019) (Zapf, 2016). This approach is relevant for reading the lexical structure of words in poetry as a system of meaning connected to the desert ecosystem.

Contemporary ecocritical approaches assert that the relationship between humans and non-humans in literary texts reflects a particular ecological awareness (Garrard, 2019) (Stibbe, 2021). Therefore, the analysis of the natural fields of meaning in this diwan allows this study to move from lexical mapping to a broader interpretation of ecological relations.

B. Theoretical Foundation of Ecocriticism (Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell's Perspective) in Literary Text Analysis

1. Definition and Scope of Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is an approach to literary criticism that places the relationship between literature and the physical environment at the center of analysis. In the monumental introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, Cheryll Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (Glotfelty, 1996). This definition emphasizes that literary texts cannot be separated from their surrounding ecological context. The environment is not merely a setting, but an integral part of the construction of meaning.

Glotfelty also emphasizes that just as feminist criticism reads texts from a gender perspective and Marxist criticism from a class perspective, ecocriticism reads texts from an earth-centered approach (Glotfelty, 1996). Thus, this approach epistemologically shifts the paradigm from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism.

2. Principles of Ecocriticism according to Glotfelty

Within his theoretical framework, Glotfelty formulates three main orientations relevant to the analysis of literary texts:

1. The presence of the non-human environment as a significant reality in the text.
2. The reciprocal relationship between humans and nature.
3. The ethical and ideological dimensions of environmental representation.

He emphasizes that literary studies must respond to the "environmental crisis" as a historical context that cannot be ignored (Glotfelty, 1996).

3. The Concept of Environmental Imagination according to Lawrence Buell

A more systematic development of ecocriticism was undertaken by Lawrence Buell in "The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture". Buell formulated four criteria for identifying texts with ecological awareness:

1. The non-human environment is presented as more than just a setting.
2. Human interests are not the only legitimate interests.
3. There is recognition of human ethical responsibility towards the environment.
4. The environment is understood as a dynamic process, not a static entity (Buell, 1995).

According to Buell, literary texts containing environmental imagination present humans as part of an interdependent ecological system (Buell, 1995). From this

perspective, nature has narrative agency—it influences the course of events and character development.

4. The Ecocentric Paradigm in Literary Analysis

Both Glotfelty and Buell agree that literary criticism needs to move toward an ecocentric paradigm. This paradigm recognizes that humans are not the center of the cosmos, but rather part of a broader ecological network. In this context, nature functions not only symbolically but also literally.

Buell emphasizes that ecological awareness in literature emerges when texts demonstrate the “interdependence of human and nonhuman systems” (Buell, 1995). This means that narrative structures reflect the interconnectedness between organisms and their habitats. Based on Glotfelty and Buell's perspective, the theoretical basis for analyzing literary texts can be formulated methodologically as follows:

1. Inventory the ecological elements in the text (fauna, flora, landscape, climate).
2. Analyze the structural relationship between humans and the environment.
3. Identify the ideological paradigm (anthropocentric or ecocentric).
4. Evaluate the ethical dimensions of the representation of nature.

This framework allows researchers to read the text as a system of meaning that reflects specific ecological relations especially between human and their nature.

C. Division of the Semantic Field in *Diwan As-Syanfara* (John Lyons' Perspective) and Its Ecocritical Interpretation (Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell's Perspective)

Within the framework of structural semantics, John Lyons asserts that lexical meaning never exists in isolation, but rather acquires its identity through systemic relations with other lexemes within a conceptual network. Language, in this view, is not simply a medium of expression, but a system of categorizing reality. Thus, when a poetic text displays a certain density of lexical content, this indicates the presence of a structured semantic field, not simply an individual aesthetic choice (Zinat, 2023).

In pre-Islamic poetry, the relationship between humans and nature is not merely a decorative backdrop, but a real structure that shapes poetic consciousness. This is significantly evident in *Diwan As-Syanfara*, particularly in the five early *qasidahs* with different *qawafi* (*Qafiyah Alif* to *Ro'*) analyzed in this study. Through a semantic approach—particularly John Lyons' semantic field theory—and an ecocritical perspective as formulated by Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell, ecological relations in texts can be mapped as a systemic and interconnected network of meanings.

According to Lyons, a field of meaning is a relational system of inter-lexical lexical constructs that mutually determine each other's semantic values within a domain of experience (Lyons, 1977). In the context of the poem *As-Syanfara*, that domain of experience is the ecology of the pre-Islamic Arabian desert—an extreme landscape that not only shapes ways of life but also constructs horizons of meaning. Thus, the ecological relations in this poem can be understood as a semantic configuration that unites humans, fauna, landscape, and death into a single cosmological totality.

The following is an illustration of the general division of the field of meaning in the *Diwan As-Syanfara* according to John Lyons:

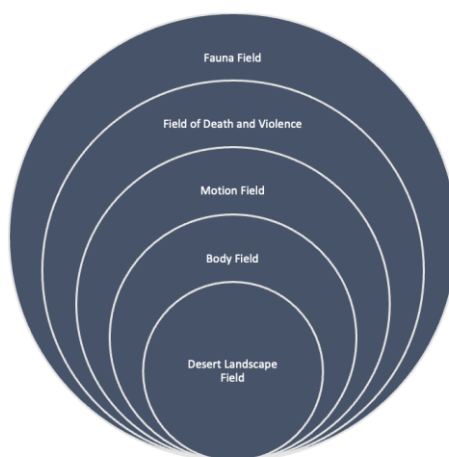


Image 2.

Illustration of the general division of the field of meaning in the *Diwan As-Syanfara*

The five qasidahs with different terms analyzed in *Diwan As-Syanfara* demonstrate the dominance of several general fields of meaning: fauna, death, movement, the body, and the desert landscape. However, this dominance of general fields of meaning is not a random and meaningless thematic list. Rather, it forms a coherent relational system, where each lexeme acquires meaning through opposition, hyponymy, collocation, and contextual distribution. Using Lyons' approach, we go beyond simply reading natural imagery but also map the conceptual structure that constructs the poetic world in *Diwan As-Syanfara*.

Table 1.

Division of semantic field forms in *Diwan As-Syanfara*

No	Field of Semantic Forms	Findings of Lexemes in 5 <i>Qasidah</i> (from <i>Qafiyah Alif to Ro'</i>)	Semantic Function
1	Fauna field	العقاب، الحُدَيّ، حمامة، السُّماني، القطاط، جواد، المطي، الحسيل	Building a hierarchy of life
2	Death field	الموت، حسام، سمّ أسود، أشلاء	Exposing the naturalness of destruction
3	Motion field	تجول، انفلتت، وثبت، تمجّ	Emphasizing dynamic existential
4	Body field	أعناق، عرقوب، أذنان، أشلاء	Presenting the materiality of existence
5	Landscape field	المطي، القطاط، السُّماني، الملح، الغدير	Becoming a total domain that encompasses all

The following is descriptions of the semantic-ecocriticism analysis of each division of meaning fields identified by the authors:

1. Fauna Field

The density of faunal lexicon such as—(العقاب، الحُدَيّ، حمامة، السُّماني، القطاط، جواد، المطي)، (الحسيل) — This indicates that the world of poetry is rooted in an ecological horizon. From Lyons' perspective, these words form a clear hyponymic field. This is evident in the excerpt from the poem below:

و نياتني الطير أو كنت شاهداً ... لأساك في البلوى أخ لك ناصر

Meaning:

"If a bird gave me a premonition or I witnessed it myself, I would certainly comfort you in your calamity as your helpful brother."

From the quote above it can be seen that "Bird" (الطير) becomes a superordinate category that encompasses eagles, doves, quail, and desert birds. However, the poet chooses a specific hyponym, rather than a generic category. This choice narrows the

reference while intensifying the semantic features. Furthermore, the poet chooses a general word like "wild animal" to encompass a specific metaphor like "eagle's claw":

تَجُولُ بِبَرِّ الْمَوْتِ فِيهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ.. بِشَوْكَتِكَ الْحَدِيدِيِّ، ضَنْئُنْ نَوَافِرُ

Meaning:

"He walks among them in the garb of death, as if they were a herd of wild animals scattered by the sharp claws of your eagles."

The words (العقاب) and (الحَدِيدِي) as found in the verse above, it can carry the meaning of components such as [+predator], [+height], [+sharpness], [+domination]. On the other hand, in the other verse below, the poet drags in words that are the opposite of the previous ones, such as (حمامة) and (السَّمَانِي) which can carry components such as [+fragility], [+non-predatory], [+proximity to the ground].

ونائحة أوحيت في الصبح سمعها ... فريع فؤادي واشـمأز وأنكرا
فخفضت جأشي ثم قلت حمامة ... دعت ساق حر في حمام تنفرا
ومقرونة شمالها بيمينها ... أجنب بزي ماؤها قد تعـصرا
ونعل كأشلاء السمانى تركتها ... على جنب مور كالنجيزة أغبرا

Meaning:

"I heard the voice of a mourner in the morning; my heart was startled, shuddered, and denied it.
"Then I calmed myself and said: it was only a dove calling for its mate who had drifted away.
Her wings seemed tied; I pulled my clothes away from her, her tears seemed to flow freely.
And sandals like pieces of quail I left on the side of the dusty, wavy ground."

In Lyons's theory, this paradigmatic opposition is not merely a visual contrast, but a differential structure that generates meaning. The eagle becomes a symbol of power because the quail is vulnerable; the predator becomes a symbol of threat because the prey is weak.

This structure creates an implicit ecological hierarchy: the sky is filled with predators, the earth with prey, and between them humans move in tension. Interestingly, however, humans do not form an autonomous field of meaning. They are always present in relation to animals – riding horses, taking refuge on camels, comparing themselves to eagles. In this relational system, human identity is absorbed into the faunal network. This interpretation is in accordance with the findings in other studies that the absence of tribal

protection structures led the Sa'alik tribe to merge with the desert ecology. Instead of finding warmth in human settlements, *As-Syanfara* discovered a sense of belonging and brotherhood among wild beasts under the canopy of the wilderness (Saidel, 2023) (Treadgold, 1975). He replaced his tribal ties – deemed narrow-minded and cowardly – with bonds to wild animals. *As-Syanfara's* connection to the harsh desert environment fostered a sense of equality, and even a moral oneness, with the animal world – sharing food and suffering with them, free from human greed (Mansour, 2005). In other study also states that the maltreatment by the tribal structure (*qabilah*) drove the poet to experience extreme social alienation, leading him to perform a ritual rejection of humanity and adopt the desert ecosystem – along with predatory animals – as a substitute for the social order (Stetkevych, 1993).

Semantic-Ecocriticism Analysis : The fauna field may disrupt the hierarchy of life

One of the main findings of this study is that the semantic field in *Diwan As-Syanfara* does not stand as a symbolic ornament, but rather as an identifiable structure. The metaphors that use desert animal imagery are not simply wild images, but rather a mirror of the poet's existential perspective.

From an ecocritical perspective, animal representations often reflect the human position within ecological networks (Buell, 1995). In *As-Syanfara's* poetry, wild animals are positioned not as "the Other," but as "ecological relatives." The poet, historically categorized as part of the *ṣu'luk* group (nomadic poets isolated from their tribes), finds philosophical solidarity with the desert fauna. The animals' biological traits – endurance, hunger, survival instinct – are projected onto the identity of the lyrical subject.

Thus, the human-fauna relationship in this poem is structural: the biological nature of animals becomes a model for subject formation. Human identity is constructed through ecological affiliation, not through anthropological superiority.

2. Field of Death and Violence

A collection of specific lexemes such as - (الموت، حسام، سمّ أسود، أشلاء) - forming a field of death that is closely intertwined with biological elements. These lexemes revolve around the meanings of biological elements, matter, and something that must happen. In Lyons's componential analysis, these words share the features of [+organic], [+material], [+inevitable]. There are no mechanistic metaphors or technologies of modern warfare; all violence is encoded in the language of nature.

تجول ببرّ الموت فيهم كأنهم ... بشوكتك الحدي ضئبن نوافر

Meaning:

"He walks among them in the garb of death, as if they were a herd of wild animals scattered by the sharp claws of your eagles."

The collocation of (الموت) with (تجول) expands its semantic features. Death is not understood as a mere passive state, but also as an entity moving, circulating, and navigating the space of life. Within Lyons' framework, this syntagmatic relation demonstrates how word distribution can modify and enrich meaning features. Similarly, sword (حسام) is compared to (لون الملح) and (أقطاع الغدير). Salt and flowing water are elements of nature, in the following *qasidah* excerpt:

حسام كلون الملح صاف حديده ... جزار كأقطاع الغدير المنعت
تراها كأذناب الحسيل صوادراً ... وقد نهلت من الدماء وعلت

Meaning:

"The edge of the sword is as clear as salt, its iron is pure; it cuts like a cut of water from a river. You see it like the tail of a desert animal stretching out, after it has drunk blood and risen high."

By connecting the instruments of war with the natural landscape, this text asserts that human violence is not external to the ecosystem, but rather part of it. The fragment of the body (أشلاء) does not simply signify destruction, but rather the body's return to the earth. As the poet expresses it:

ونعل كأشلاء السمانى تركتها ... على جنب مور كالنحيزة أغبرا

Meaning:

"And I left sandals like pieces of quail on the side of the dusty, wavy ground."

In this system of semantic fields, destruction is an ecological event. Therefore, death is nothing more than a natural event hierarchically interconnected with life, and the poet connects it with destructive events blended with the natural landscape to create a biological and living impression.

Semantic-Ecocriticism Analysis : The death field may reveal the naturalness of destruction

The ecological relationship in *As-Syanfara's* poetry is also manifested through the semantic field of death. Animal carcasses, blood, and torn bodies are recurring images. From a modern perspective, these images can be read as expressions of brutality. However, within an ecocentric framework, destruction is part of the ecological cycle.

Death in this poem is not a metaphysical tragedy, but rather an ecological inevitability. It arises as a consequence of the struggle for survival in an extreme environment like desert. Semantically, the field of death is networked with the field of fauna and the field of the body, demonstrating that life and death are intertwined in a single cycle of meaning.

In this poem, the desert environment becomes the agent that determines the fate of living things. Death is not merely the result of social conflict, but the ecological interaction between organisms and their habitat. Thus, the ecological relationship that is established is cyclical: (life–hunting–death–becoming a corpse–becoming part of the landscape).

3. Field of Motion

Verbs discovered by the authors, such as -(تجول، انفلتت، وثبت، تمجّ)- create an intense field of motion. In Lyons' approach, the syntagmatic distribution of verbs determines the conceptual rhythm of the text. Common features of these verbs are [+dynamic], [+reactive], [+energetic].

إذا انفلتت مني جواد كريمة ... وثبت فلم أخطئ عنان جوادي

Meaning:

"If a noble horse escapes from me, I immediately jump and do not miss holding the reins."

Many active verbs use the lexemes of fauna, death, and life, such as "death wanders," "horse jumps," "poison gushes," "bird flies," and "wound reacts." There is no absolute static, only movement within a relentless flow of energy. As we can see in the stanza below:

فإن تطعنوا الشيخ الذي لم تفوقوا ... منيَّته وغبت إذ لم أشهد
فطعنة خلس منكم قد تركتها ... تمج على أقطارها سم أسود

Meaning :

"If you stab the old man whose death you did not precede, and I am not present to witness, then I have left behind one cunning stab of yours, which spewed black poison in all directions."

The dominance of this field of movement shapes a textual essence which reinforces the fact that existence is movement. In the harsh, demanding context of the desert,

movement is not merely an action, but a prerequisite for existence.

Semantic-Ecocriticism Analysis : The field of motion may emphasize the dynamic existence of Sa'alik

The semantic field of movement in *Diwan As-Syanfara* includes verbs that denote running, exploring, ambushing, and settling. Movement is not merely a physical act, but a mode of existence. In desert ecology, stagnation means death; only the mobile survive. Ecological relations here manifest as adaptation. Humans and animals alike depend on mobility to obtain food and avoid danger. Semantically, the field of movement connects the body's field (muscles, legs, breath) with the landscape's field (distance, hills, plains). This network emphasizes that *Sa'alik's* existence is a dynamic relationship with space.

4. Body Field

The use of anatomical lexemes such as -(أعناق، عرقوب، أذنان، أشلاء)- indicates a tendency toward bodily fragmentation. Within Lyons' framework, the choice of specific hyponyms reinforces the [+material], [+organic], [+divided] features.

وقد سبقتنا أم عمرو بأمرها ... وكانت بأعناق المطي أظلت

Meaning:

"Umm 'Amr preceded us in her affairs; she moved quickly on the necks of riding camels."

The body is not referred to as a sacred totality, but as separate parts. An animal's tail, a bird's leg tendon, a camel's neck, a fragment of a human body – all belong to the same system of features. This paradigmatic relationship affirms that the human and animal bodies are subject to similar biological laws. This relationship even extends beyond the relationship between the human and animal bodies, but also the relationship between inanimate objects such as a sword, which relates to the poet's depiction of nature and the diversity of fauna, as seen in the following two stanzas:

حسام كلون الملح صاف حديده ... جزار كأقطاع الغدير المنعت

تراها كأذنان الحسيل صوادراً ... وقد نهلت من الدماء وعلت

Meaning:

"The edge of the sword is as clear as salt, its iron is pure; it cuts like a cut of water from a river. You see it like the tail of a desert animal stretching out, after it has drunk blood and risen high."

Semantic-Ecocriticism Analysis : The body field may present the materiality of partial Sa'alik's existence

Thus, the body's field demonstrates an existential reduction: humans are not transcendent entities, but rather organisms within the natural system. The fragmentation of the body also serves as a metaphor for mortality. Similarly, the joints of small birds, which are a manifestation of the crucial faunal body, are mentioned in the following stanza:

فمستبسل ضافي القميص ضمته ... بأزرق لا نكس ولا متعوج
عليه نساري على خوط نبعة ... وفوق كعرقوب القطاط مدرج

Meaning:

"I embrace a brave man in a long robe with a straight, unbent blue sword.

Above him is a straight spear of nab wood, and its tip is like the curved joint of a small bird."

This also underscores the fact that desert landscapes can reshape human perception. Humans do experience existential reduction and they are no longer viewed as masters of space, but rather as organisms bound by geographical and ecological limits (Alwaqaa, 2026). Overall, the depiction of the physical field in the *As-Syanfara* poem leads readers to understand the crucial existence of the body, becoming the primary clause for movement in *Sa'alik's* life.

5. Desert Landscape Field

The meaning of the desert landscape can be seen in the poem, which links fauna with its ecological system, as in the following stanza:

تراها كأذ ناب الحسيل صوادراً ... وقد نهلت من الدماء وعلت

Meaning:

"You see it like the tail of a desert beast that is stretched out after it has drunk blood and is lifted high."

Although the word "desert" is not always explicitly mentioned, the presence of lexemes such as (المطي، القطاط، السُمانى، الملح، الغدير) suggests the ecological domain of the desert. In Lyons's framework, this is a superordinate domain that encompasses all other fields of meaning, from fauna, death, movement, and the field of the body, all of which require a specific setting that leads to the poet's intended meaning. This is clearly seen in

meanings such as the camel, a typical desert fauna:

وقد سبقتنا أم عمرو بأمرها ... وكانت بأعناق المطي أظلت

Meaning:

"Umm 'Amr preceded us in her affairs; she moved quickly on the necks of riding camels."

That life is lived through a struggle to maintain it, all the instruments in the subfields mentioned above are merely tools to strengthen the meaning of human existence in the harsh and unusual desert environment.

Semantic-Ecocriticism Analysis : The desert landscape can be viewed as cosmological space becoming a total domain that encompasses all that exists

Landscape in pre-Islamic poetry is generally understood as a setting for a journey (*raḥīl*). However, in *Diwan As-Syanfara*, the desert landscape appears as a total domain that encompasses all other fields of meaning. The desert is not merely a physical space, but an cosmological space where ecological relationships are interwoven.

Within the framework of early ecocriticism, as proposed by Glotfelty (1996), literary texts can be read as representations of human relations with their physical environment. In this poem, the desert is depicted as a harsh, dry, and deadly space, yet simultaneously a space of liberation. It serves as both a testing ground and a character-forming arena for the *Sa'alik* poets. They live in this savage place, yet they also die there. On the one hand, they delight in the desert life coexisting with wild animals and nature, and on the other, they also resent the discriminatory attitudes of society and society towards them.

In this context, ecological relations are not harmonious and romantic, but rather realistic and existential. The desert is a neutral and impersonal entity; it takes no sides, but is not antagonistic either. The emerging ecological awareness is implicit: humans must adapt to the laws of nature, not conquer them.

All the imagery in this lexeme operates within the horizon of the arid landscape: vast skies, dusty soil, desert animals, long journeys. This domain creates semantic cohesion. There is no shift to urban terrain or abstract metaphysics. Everything returns to the categories of nature that are tangible and perceptible to the five senses.

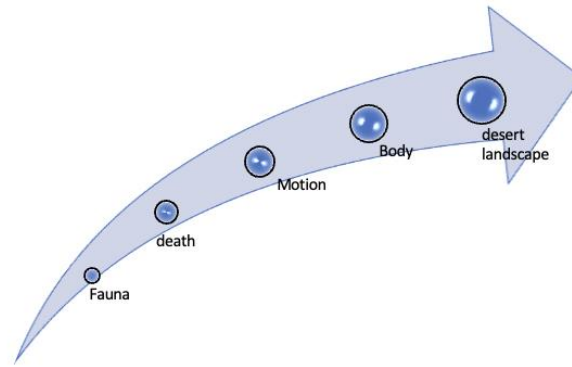


Image 3.

The hierarchical structure can be understood in the above illustration

This means that the entire lexical system operates within a consistent ecological conceptual field. Semantically, humans, especially the poet *Sa'alik*, cannot live without the existence of nature and fauna, as well as the movement produced by the body in the ecological desert environment. Although many real threats are found in the harsh struggle for survival that can lead to death and bodily destruction in the ecological system of the desert landscape, their mutual relationship remains unavoidable.

From the mapping of the semantic fields conducted based on Lyons' theory in the 6 Diwans of *As-Syanfara's*, it appears that each field (fauna, death, movement, body, landscape) does not stand alone. They are intertwined, forming a semantic totality. This totality reflects the cosmological integration of humans, animals, and the environment.

The ecological relationship in this pre-Islamic poem is non-dualistic. There is no strict separation between subject and nature; there is only coexistence in the same space. Human identity is constructed through ecological interactions – through hunger, travel, hunting, and confrontation with death. The ecological awareness revealed is not yet as articulate as in contemporary environmental discourse. However, implicitly, this poem represents the world as a network of relationships. In ecocritical terms, this text demonstrates "embeddedness" – humanity's immersion in the natural system (Glottfelty, 1996).

CONCLUSION

In general, *Diwan As-Syanfara* contains a concentration of vocabulary that forms specific meanings imbued with ecocentric values. Through a semantic approach (John Lyons' perspective) and an ecocritical approach (Cheryll Glottfelty and Lawrence Buell's perspective), this poem can be read as a complete relational system. The poetic field of meaning in *Diwan As-Syanfara* lies not in individual symbols, but in mutually defining lexical configurations. (1) The "field of fauna" establishes a hierarchy of life; (2) the "field

of death" demonstrates the naturalness of destruction; (3) the "field of movement" affirms a dynamic existential; (4) the "field of the body" presents the materiality of existence; and (5) the "field of the desert landscape" becomes the total domain that encompasses all. Thus, the language of this poem constructs a non-anthropocentric ecological cosmology. Humans, animals, death, and the land exist within a single, equal semantic network. In this relational system, meaning arises not from claims of human superiority, but from the awareness that all creatures share the same conceptual space within the harsh and vast desert landscape.

The second research finding is the human-nature relationship in the text, which is not merely decorative but relational and structural, where the biological nature of animals is projected into the formation of the subject's identity in the poem. Furthermore, the desert landscape functions as an ecological space that strengthens the integration between humans, animals, and the environment as a cosmological whole. Thus, the structure of the faunal semantic field in this pre-Islamic poem indicates an implicit ecological awareness that shapes the poetic imagination and construction of meaning in *Diwan As-Syanfara*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research was sponsored by an internal research grant from LPPM UAD in the year of 2025. The authors are grateful for the opportunity to develop this literary text-based ecological study. The authors also hopes that similar research will develop further and attract greater interest, particularly in maintaining the ecological and natural resilience of the place where we live. The authors may suggest that future research will compare *Diwan As-Syanfara* with the works of other Sa'alik poets, compare Jahiliyyah poetry with early Islamic poetry, use corpus linguistics to measure frequency and collocation, or integrate semantic field theory with cognitive linguistics and animal studies.

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