Lexical Choice and Crazy-wisdom: A Usage-Based Interpretation of Bāhū’s Abyāt

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Abstract
Bāhū’s Abyāt opens the doors of spiritual world for the Seekers of God who have been demoted from their spiritual quest. The objective of the study is to interpret Bāhū’s poetry from the perspective of semantic field theory by pinpointing the semantic content of the synonyms for Murshid such as rāḥīḥa, yār, fāqīr and ʿāshiq and antonyms to Murshid such as ʿālim and bay-adab, a few examples being mentioned from Abyāt. Albeit, these words have different denotative signification, yet revealingly, these have the same connotative purport and seem to be related or un-related, as the case may be, to the concept of Murshid. The significance of the study lies in the fact that Bāhū’s poetry appears to have never been analyzed from semantic field theory viewpoint. Thus, the present research is an endeavor to unearth the underlying principles working behind such untraditional lexical choice as well as the incorporation of the phenomenon of “crazy-wisdom” in Bāhū’s poetry.

Keywords
lexical choice, semantic field theory, Sūfī poetry, metaphor, crazy-wisdom, synonyms/antonyms

Introduction
Hazrat Sulṭān Bāhū, the great friend of Hū and great Sūfī of Punjab is venerated with the title of King of Gnostics. The word, Hū meaning “He,” refers to God. Sūfīs commonly repeat it during their meditational exercises known as dhikr (Remembrance of God). The refrain, Hū became so characteristic of Sulṭān Bāhū’s style that his title, Bāhū (with Him) appears in the final line of all his poems (Elias, 1998, p. 5). Bāhū is also regarded as the prolific poet of Punjabi language. He was born in 1629 in Shorkot, Punjab. But his fame transcends the territorial boundaries between Pakistan and India due to his popularity in both the countries alike (Ahmad, 2018, p. 7). He never got formal education, for he had been adored by Ḩūd, the Almighty with ‘ilm-ladunni, a “divinely-inspired knowledge” which is inspired and bestowed directly by Ḩūd, The Exalted, upon whomever He wills of His believing slaves. This kind of knowledge is also known as ʿilm al-bāṭin (the hidden or esoteric knowledge), the opposite of ʿilm al-zāhir, the apparent or exoteric knowledge, which is so called because it is obtained by open means, such as study of books, or lessons from a teacher (Ilm Al-Ladunni, 2014).

Bāhū’s poetry is a reflection of his profound meditation and involvement in maʿrifat-i Ilāhī (recognition of God), (Ahmad, 2018, p. 8). He wrote more than 100 books, all in Persian language, except Abyāt which is in Punjabi and is considered an important document for the guidance of spirituality-lovers (Elias, 1998, p. 2). His vocabulary choice in Abyāt made his poetic style unique and the factors contributing to such uniqueness can be determined in the light of semantic field theory. Abyāt is a collection of Bāhū’s poems in Punjabi Language. Abyāt is an Arabic word which is plural of bayt; a two lined poetry and sometimes more than that. His bayt is based upon four lines in which every line serves as one bayt of the couplet. The book is an essence of his spiritual teachings and earned him a lasting fame (Hazrat Sultan Bahu (n.d.). Since Bāhū’s Abyāt are normally arranged in alphabetical order by the first letter of Arabic-Persian alphabet and as such arrangement has absolutely no relationship to the content, the poems cited in this article remain without any title (as in the original). For, one characteristic of the genre of Punjabi Abyāt is that the content of each line of a poem does not necessarily have anything to do with the next (Elias, 1998, p. 11).

Lehrer and Batten (1983) define semantic field theory as: “a set of lexemes which cover a certain conceptual domain and which bear certain specifiable relations to one another”

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(p. 119). In other words, semantic field theory looks at the sets of semantically related words or the relationship between lexical items. Leech (1974) puts it: “The search for an explanation of linguistic phenomena in terms of what is not language is as vain as the search for an exit from a room which has no doors or windows” (p. 5). In this respect, Bāhū’s poetry presents an immense opportunity to be critically evaluated in the light of semantic field theory because he constructs his spiritual message through the use of synonyms and antonyms; the two leading lexical strategies that the speakers of a language use to create their meanings (Thipa, 1979, p. 83).

In order to convey the meaning of the word, Murshid, Bāhū uses different words but with the same semantic implications. The words such as rāṇībā, yār (A Punjabi word meaning “friend” or “beloved,” Ahmad, 2018, pp. 71–80) and faqīr are a few examples from his poetry which support my claim. Rāṇībā (true lover, loyal) and Hīr (Rāṇībā’s sweetheart) are the two very famous characters in Punjabi folktales and Khayrās were those who took Hīr against her heart/will. The tragic romance of Hīr and Rāṇībā is a part of the shared folklore of all Punjabis and has been interpreted on many different levels, from simple love story to complex mystical allegory about the soul’s journey toward God. Therefore, in the skillful hands of the Sūfī folk-poets, the heroine, Hīr becomes so sublime that her physical and external quest for the Beloved, Rāṇībā is transformed into a spiritual and internal one (Ahmad, 2018, pp. 29–30).

Likewise, the word, faqīr is derived from Arabic word, faqr which means “poverty” or “need” or “lack” and faqīr is both a “poverty-stricken” and “poor man” (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, pp. 722–723). Sūfīs believe that material poverty is prerequisite for spiritual wealth (Elias, 1998, p. 27). In Bāhū’s poetry, it refers to a Muslim saint who is regarded as a holy man and who passes life having minimum needs of life (Ahmad, 2018, p. 14). Also, Murshid is originally an Arabic word for “guide” or “great master” and it is derived from the root, rusdī with the basic meaning “to be on the right path,” “follow the right course,” “be well guided” or “to lead the right way” so Murshid refers to a “spiritual guide” or “guide to the right way” (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, p. 341). It is Murshid whom a student, murīd takes an allegiance or bay’a in and Sūfism such a type of initiatory pact of allegiance to Spiritual Guide is the first step toward awakening the soul with the love of God (Kalhoro & Saleem, 2016, pp. 170–71). Bāhū’s poetry and his lexical choice (as it would be proved shortly) revolve around the concept of Murshid.

By looking at these expressions in the context of his poetry, one notices that although the literal or more precisely the denotative meanings of these words have quite distinct insinuations, yet in their connotative sense (as it would be proved shortly) they all refer to the person who can act as a spiritual guide or more accurately Murshid for the knowledge-seekers of spirituality. To Arnold (1986), if the denotative meaning of a word is determined by “virtue of what the word refers to,” the connotative meaning is purely a communicative and pragmatic signification that the word is assigned “by virtue of where, when, how, by whom, for what purpose and in what contexts it is or may be used” (p. 48) (emphasis added). Being a Sūfī poet, Bāhū was having a definite purpose of writing the poetry and that was to impart spiritual lessons to the seekers of God because in the context of Sūfī poetry, “poetic imagination and spiritual subjectivity” are intrinsically linked with each other (Ali, 2016, p. 9). Hence, on the basis of connotative and denotative meanings, a linguistic analysis of Bāhū’s lexical choice is necessary to find out the rationale behind the poetic use of language.

Besides, the Murshid-Murīd (Guide-Disciple’s spiritual pact) relation is of paramount importance in Sūfī poetry and this is the reason that Bāhū has attributed Murshid with different titles. Ali (2016) notes that Sūfī poetry rejects a ritualistic, theological or mind-based understanding of religion and favors “heart-centered notions of spirituality” that are driven by devotional feelings towards Murshid and other “Beloved souls” (p. 11). Also, Rehmūn (2016) asserts that according to Bāhū, the height of spirituality is to get “the Divine Vision” and presence in Maqīlis-i Muহammad: the Holy Assembly of the Prophet (PBUH) where only the chosen saints have access at proper intervals to illuminate their hearts with the blessings from the Prophet (PBUH) (pp. 102–103).

The only persons who follow the footsteps of Murshid with devotion and perseverance are blessed with the Holy Company of The Prophet (PBUH) (p. 102). Bāhū maintains: “May my perfect spiritual Guide (Murshid), who planted this ‘Jasmine’ plant in my heart, be ever blessed” (p. 12). (All the references to Bāhū’s poetry/poems have been made from Saeed Ahmad’s Great Sufī Wisdom: Sulṭān Bāhū, an English translation of Bāhū’s verses, unless otherwise mentioned). Notably, in Bāhū’s ongoing verse, the word, “Jasmine” refers to the love of God which Murshid through his spiritual teachings, inculcates in the heart of his disciple (Ahmad, 2018, p. 12). Indeed, “Sufī writers traditionally emphasize the centrality of a living spiritual guide, stating that it is almost impossible to attain advanced mystical states without the help of such a master” (Elias, 1998, p. 6). To this end, all Bāhū’s poetic ideas revolve around the central brand of Murshid-Murīd relationship and this in turn determines his choice of lexical items in Abyāā. Therefore, the aim of the study is to appraise his poetry from the perspective of semantic field theory, while exploring how his poetry imparts spiritual lessons in crazy-wise teachers’ style.

According to Feuerstein (2006) the term, “crazy-wisdom” is associated with the spiritual pursuits which are based on an outrageous, unconventional, unpredictable and unexpected behavior of the spiritual masters. Therefore, such a wisdom is an important method for self-exploration for spirituality-seekers who uncompromisingly follow the authoritative spiritual guide’s precepts for their inner growth: “The crazy-wisdom style of teaching demonstrated by great teachers . . . is simply
a more radical version of the task assumed by all authentic spiritual guides” (pp. 213–214). Feuerstein (2006, p. 3) popularized the idea of “crazy-wisdom” with reference to Sufi teachings. In essence, such Sufi teachers’ actions/ideas incorporate crazy-wisdom, because, by challenging the traditional religious boundaries and prescriptive impositions, they startle/shock the conventional mindset. This is absolutely true of Bāhū’s poetry as he harshly criticizes the orthodox religious scholars and celebrates his personal spiritual relations with God, the Almighty.

**Previous Studies on Bāhū’s Abyāt and Feuerstein’s Concept of “Crazy-wisdom”**

According to Elias (1998) Bāhū’s poetry reflects an expression of disillusionment with institutionalized, formal, and legalistic forms of religion. It rather focuses on individual’s personal faith and spiritual relationship with God. He is of the view that Bāhū’s poetry instructs God’s seekers and makes them able to experience the love-of-God. Bāhū also believes that, losing and annihilating the mortal self within the “divine-self” should be the sole purpose of an individual’s life. This is in fact losing of one’s personal self or identity within the greater identity of God. To Elias (1998) the prominent feature of Abyāt is that, each line can be interpreted independently and it does not need to be necessarily studied in relationship with the previous or upcoming lines. Also, Bāhū’s use of language is conversational as well as idiomatic and it reverses the usual word-order of Punjabi language very often (p. 11).

Another relevant work, Manāqib-i Sulṭānī was written by Sulṭān Ḥāmid, a descendent of Bāhū. Ḥāmid (1961) claims that Bāhū produced almost 140 works, of which only 26 works have come down to us. This book is considered the most reliable source about the life and works of Bāhū. The writer has investigated the symbolic elements and the use of striking images from Bāhū’s poetry and discussed them from the perspective of Sufism. Bāhū’s poetry played a crucial role in influencing Hindus and their conversion to Islam in the subcontinent. The book throws light on Bāhū’s works in Persian language in general and the role of his Abyāt in directing the spirituality-lovers to the saintly path in particular.

Likewise, Ahmad’s *Great Sufi Wisdom: Sulṭān Bāhū* is an English version of Bāhū’s Abyāt, with explanatory notes on the impressions which are precisely related to Punjabi culture. Apart from rendering the Punjabi verses into English, he has also supplied the readers with critical appreciation of the selected poems from the perspective of Sufism. The brief overview is enough to indicate that so far Bāhū’s poetry has not been investigated with semantic field theory in the background. Up to this, although the scholars have translated Bāhū’s poetry into English by providing a reasonable commentary on his verses (Ahmad, 2018; Elias, 1998; Ilāhī, 1967), yet, it has not been studied from the linguistic perspective. Specifically, the way lexical items are displaced from their instantaneous denotive use and awarded new connotative meanings, is what remains unexplored. In this way, the recent study is an attempt to provide insights for the philosophy or rationale, working (as a central force) behind such lexical choice.

Feuerstein (2006, p. 346) likens “crazy-wisdom” to “learned ignorance” which corresponds to an attitude of self-effacement and sincerity to the Infinite, the essence of wisdom. In other words, surpassing one’s constitution/body by merging it with the Infinite, is the ultimate object of “crazy-wisdom” thinking. It is not a form of knowledge but a manifestation of “Divine Ignorance” based on an unpremeditated and spontaneous action that has the purpose of enlightening others by transmitting spiritual lessons because “crazy wisdom occurs not on the transcendental plane but in a real-life context, it paradoxically always triggers knowledge in others” (p. 348). As Bāhū considers “self-effacement” and “sincerity to the Infinite” as the prerequisites for soul-awakening, “crazy-wisdom” concept is therefore pertinent to invoke his unconventional way of communicating spiritual values in Abyāt.

**Semantic Field Theory: An Overview**

According to Lehrer (1974) semantic field theory is the study of a set of lexemes which cover a certain conceptual domain and have definite relationships with one another. One of the most important assumptions of this theory is that the vocabulary of a language is a well-structured element of it as is the case with phonology and grammar. She is of the view that in the 1930s, it was the German philosopher Trier who revolutionized the theory of semantic field and awarded it new dimensions. Wu (1988, pp. 94–95) has summarized Trier’s observations on semantic field theory in the subsequent three points. First, the vocabulary of a language is semantically coherent and a language possesses a holistic lexical structure. Second, as the vocabulary of a language is semantically connected, instead of focusing on any semantic change in isolation, one should treat it as a unified classification. Third, the lexemes are interrelated in “sense” and the connotation of any word should be determined and analyzed by comparing it with other words. As a result, word is meaningful only in its own semantic field.

Trier (as cited in Bierwisch & Heidolph, 1971) anticipated the theory “to account for the observation that the meaning of lexical elements is specified by their relatedness to and their difference from other relevant elements” (p. 171). Ullmann (1962, p. 105) while studying Semantics, pronounced that 1 day it would be possible to build up a science of meaning based on philosophical semantics and such a science would be helpful in invoking a general framework as well as a wider background for meaning-analysis and vocabulary-embodiment of a language. In this process, the general linguistics will resource a massive expanse of data on
vocabulary and semantics would complete and interpret such data in the light of situational experiences. His impressive work, *Words and Their Use* is deemed to be the best preliminary book in the field of “Semantics” in general and “theory of semantic field” in particular.

For Filyasova (2019) “a linguistic method, studying systemic functional relationships in a language, is semantic field theory” (p. 701). Her innovative article, “The English Economic Term ‘Human Capital’ and its Semantic Field in Scientific Discourse” aims at differentiating the semantic field of the term, “Human Capital” from its related lexical units in the scientific economic discourse. For her, a semantic study of “Human Capital” can be significant for practical purposes of teaching business English to students, specializing in management and economics. Likewise, Dullieva’s (2017) article, “Semantic Fields: Formal Modelling and Interlanguage Comparison” deals with the problems of interlanguage comparison of semantic fields having a shared integral sense. After making a comparative analysis of the distinct semantic fields involving “cooking verbs” from English and Russian languages, she has demonstrated how such semantic features of lexemes create an abstract model of concept that semantically unites all the units of compared semantic fields. The article concludes that “the semantic field of cooking verbs in English is more specific compared with that in Russian” (p. 1).

The above-mentioned articles are instrumental in broadening the scope of semantic field theory in terms of treating it a cross-disciplinary mechanism that can make the lexemes related to economic and managerial sciences and cross-cultural languages, as the object of its analysis. The current study also determines the semantic field of Bāhū’s *Abyāt* by tracing the linkages between his spiritual thoughts and lexical choices. Arnold’s *The English Word*, is congenial to my reading of Bāhū’s poetry. For, the book discusses the denotative/connotive and synonym/antonym properties of a language in detail and building on these philosophical understandings based on the importance of vocabulary in the meaning-making processes of a language, I will unearth the lexical choices’ resonance with the desired message of Bāhū’s poetry.

**Methodology**

The research is qualitative in nature and semantic field theory functions as theoretical framework for the study. For this purpose, the investigative study of Punjabi lexical items from Bāhū’s poetry has been carried out, to establish how in his poetry such items are inter-related with or separate from one another in terms of their connotative implications. Wilkin (1972) has a famous line: “Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (p. 111). The vocabulary is fundamental and an integral part of a language. In this respect, the analysis would chiefly focus on the identification of “synonyms” and “antonyms” to the conception of *Murshid* from the poems under appraisal. Moreover, it would be ascertained that it is not the “denotative meaning” of these items that renders them either as synonyms or antonyms to *Murshid*. Contrarily, it is their connotation that solidifies them as thus, making Bāhū’s poetry an illustration of crazy-wisdom. While dissecting Bāhū’s *Abyāt*, the technique of close-reading has been employed and the concern has been with related meanings of different lexical items. For the evaluation of poetry from the perspective of the said theory, Arnold’s (1986, pp. 48–49) views on denotation and connotation have been taken into account.

Besides, the metaphors and similes used in *Abyāt* for symbolically expressing spiritual lessons with reference to *Murshid*, have also been explained: “A metaphor is a transfer of name based on the association of similarity and thus is actually a hidden comparison. It presents a method of description which likens one thing to another by referring to it as if it were some other one” (Arnold, 1986, p. 64). Drawing on Arnold’s concepts based on distinguishing various modes of denotation, connotation and poetic metaphors, the study makes a usage-based interpretation of Bāhū’s lexical choices in terms of their being embedded with “crazy-wisdom.” In this regard, the lexical items under discussion might be distinct on the basis of their denotative connotation but in “connotative” logic, these might be treated as corresponding with one another or unalike from one another. For example, the words, *yār rāṅjhā* or *faqīr* have all distinct denotative significances, nevertheless in their connotations, these all are used as attributes to *Murshid*, the all-pervasive, dynamic and nourishing force in Bāhū’s *Abyāt*: “The relationship of the direct denotative meaning of the word and the meaning it has in a particular literary context is based on similarity of some features in the objects compared” (Arnold, 1986, p. 64).

**Bāhū’s Abyāt and the Analysis of Synonyms to Murshid**

It is pertinent to underscore that Bāhū’s lexical selection stems out from the motive to communicate and teach spiritual lessons to the saintly-path travelers. The core theme of his poetry lies in the incorporation of crazy-wisdom and therefore he can be classified with crazy-wise teachers. According to Feuerstein (2006) such teachers are different from the Holy Fools, the Sūfis who purposefully attract the ridicule and condemnation of others in order to cultivate humility. The formers are more concerned with conveying spiritual lessons and the ego personality is of no significance to them (pp. 339–341). Accordingly, “crazy wisdom or holy madness, is a radical style of teaching or demonstrating spiritual values” and the crazy-wise teacher is the one who:

Typically instructs others in ways that are designed to startle or shock the conventional mind. . . The crazy-wise teachers are
eccentrics who use their eccentricity to communicate an alternative vision to the one that governs ordinary life. They are masters of inversion, proficient breakers of taboos, and lovers of surprise, contradiction, and ambiguity. (Feuerstein, 2006, p. 3)

Bāhū’s poetry seems to be the reflection of “crazy-wisdom” because Sūfīsm within Islamic religion is altogether an esoteric and mystical path to soul purification (Piraino, 2016, p. 94). Bāhū says: “Watching Murshid for me is equal to millions of Pilgrimages” (p. 20). As he assigned the spiritual master with diverse labels, the analysis is based on identifying the different titles that have been awarded to Murshid. I argue that Bāhū’s synonyms to Murshid seem to be an instance of what Arnold (1986, p. 64) calls poetic metaphors which are the fruit of writer’s creative imagination. For example, in one of his poems, Murshid is termed as faqīr: “O Bāhū, none else killed the thief of their inner-selves except Friend of God (Faqīrs)” (p. 13). In the quoted verse, the word, faqīr in literal sense stands for needy or poor, but Bāhū has broadened the use of the word by substituting it as a title for Murshid because just like Murshid, faqīr is presented as having been able to become God’s friend. Thipa (1979) is of the observation that semantic field theory can help in screening the “interconnection” between lexemes in which the same words may have different meanings and alternatively, the different lexical items may have same imports (p. 83).

In a crazy-wise teaching style, Bāhū continues guiding the spirituality-seekers and declares that “without perishing themselves they cannot be in union with God, even the congregational prayers are not beneficial” (p. 27) (Emphasis added). To the researcher, this seems to be another addition to the synonyms of Murshid, for he is being presented as a person who successfully annihilates or perishes his own self/ego in the search of God. According to Arnold (1986) the meaning of a word not only conveys some reproduction of objective reality but also connotation, which effectively reveals “the speaker’s state of mind and his attitude to what he is speaking about” (p.43). So, on the basis of connotative implication, the title, ḥanī can be yet another attribute of Murshid because the phrase, “congregational prayers” is enough to suggest that without self-destruction, even saying prayers five times a day on regular basis, would remain unfruitful. The word, ḥanī is derived from the Arabic word, ḥanā, meaning “destruction,” “annihilation” “extinction,” or “termination” (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, p. 729). However, Sūfī poets use it, to mean a person who negates his ego/self and worldly pursuits/pleasures for the greater cause, which is to please God (Elias, 1998, p. 36). Hence, in order to accomplish the negation of ego, one needs to get rid of from the attachments of this material world and as a matter of fact, if one keeps such attachments alive, they can never find the true path to God. Claxton (1981) maintains that the spiritual teacher must be a demolition expert and he should strategically charge his disciple to blow up his well-established super-structure of the ego. The teacher must do it “in the right sequence and at the right speed” exhausting whatever the piety-seeker brings as his raw material for the sake of accomplishing spiritual enlightenment (p. 98).

Likewise, Bāhū is of the view that one may need to sacrifice his/her head (life) for the sake of God and those who devote their breath in imagining Him, are the real Bāhū, yet another title for Murshid: “Only then you deserve the name of Bāhū, if you merge your soul with the Essence of God” (p. 90). This also leads us to the idea that realizing of one’s own self is the first step to the recognition of God. God’s love is the only cure for all diseases, be these physical or spiritual and to have communication with Him, one should first of all kill their self/ego. Bāhū advises his readers to sit in the company of saints as this will give them an opportunity to practically experience and understand the mystery of “death-before-dying.” For Ahmad (2018) the concept of “death-before-dying” may serve to change humans’ perceptions of their lives as it may lead “to such a perception of life which is free from all sorts of evil and greed” (p. 53). Bāhū asserts that only those persons could understand the secrets of life, who “died before death” (p. 52). To Zebiri (2012) it is the quality of Sūfī poetry to utter “ecstatic utterances, whereby seemingly irrational, nonsensical, or even blasphemous declarations were made by persons in a God-intoxicated state” (p. 96).

Dullieva (2017) has precisely argued that the words within the semantic field are interconnected in a variety of semantic applications because such a field is important in liking them to “a common basic semantic component” (p. 1). I argue that all Bāhū’s mystic thoughts revolve around Murshid, a common basic semantic component of his poetic sensibility which constitutes and determines the semantic field of his lexical choice. As for the Sūfī poets, religious observances can never be fruitful unless accompanied and performed with sincere intention and as Murshid do have such a good intention in his devotion to God, they should be followed steadfastly by the seekers of spirituality. Bāhū maintains: “Enter the bazaar (market) of love by receiving guidance from your Spiritual Guide” (p. 40). By using the word, rehbar (which literally means a leader) as a substitute for “Spiritual Guide,” Bāhū has provided another title to Murshid because in the absence of a Perfect Spiritual Guide, one’s knowledge and mind remain absolutely unprofitable to them. Notably, the real virtuous/saints never get contaminated with worldly impurities, despite the fact that they have to live in the materialist polluted/corrupted world and therefore they can serve as Perfect Guide to God’s-seekers. Murshid himself faces allurements but being a true saint, he detaches himself from such splendorous life to which other men usually indulge and become victim of the materialist environment. The murid (devotee) is, therefore, required to follow his rehbar and show: “unconditional obedience to the master to the extent of being “like a corpse in the hands of its washer”; this included not arguing with or contradicting the teacher, or seeking any explanation for his instructions, no matter how unusual they might seem” (Zebiri, 2012, p. 99).
Accordingly, Bāhū has used similes and metaphors to make his spiritual lessons forceful. In a poem, he compares Murshid to dhobī (washer-man) and Murshid’s spiritual glance is compared with washer man’s soap. dhobī is a Punjabi word for a laundryman who in older days used to beat the clothes against a stone in order to wash them clean (Ahmad, 2018, p. 74). Just as washer man, using soap washes the clothes from dirt, Murshid is the person who purifies the soul of his disciples from impurities. In other words, comparing spiritual glance with the soap of a washer man is a rich metaphor for cleaning the devotees’ hearts from all sort of impurities or dirt. In the words of Bāhū: “Such a being should be the guide, O Bāhū, who could inhabit each and every pore of my being” (p. 74). Additionally, Murshid is attributed with having the knowledge of two letters, that is, alif and mīm. Alif is the first letter of Arabic alphabet and also the first letter of the word, Allah and mīm is the first letter of Muhammad, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and in Islamic mystic poetry, it is a common way of referring to the Holy Prophet, Muhammad (PBUH) (Elias, 1998, p. 4). Sūfīs, therefore, uphold that the true understanding of these two letters is equal to the knowledge that one can get by reading the entire books of the world. Hence, instead of going after worldly knowledge, Sūfīs strive for God and His Prophet, Muhammad (PBUH). For Bāhū, the persons who have perfectly learned and understood these two letters from the core of their hearts, “will have proper penmanship” (p. 75). Zebiri (2012) is of the opinion that in classical Sūfī writings, one often comes across with cynicism about the traditional and intellectual forms of learning by emphasizing their limitations and “inferiority to gnosis (maʿrifa)—knowledge based on direct experience of the Divine” (p. 96).

In a poem, Murshid is also titled as dilbar, signifying that he is all beautiful, worth-loving and perfectly handsome. To quote Bāhū: “I am neither a beauty nor a wealthy person, so how can I attract Him (Murshid) towards me” (p. 80). The word, dilbar is originally a Persian word used in Urdu and Punjabi languages to mean “a person who is endearing” or “perfectly handsome” (Ahmad, 2018, p. 80). Indeed, according to Feuerstein (2006) one of the striking features of crazy-wisdom is that it very often reflects “spectacular acts of self-abnegation—the practice of humility” (p. 19). Entitling Murshid as rānījhā is yet another proof that it is he who is all important and the devotee is bound to follow his footsteps steadfastly. Bāhū asserts that “those who are the khayrās from the very beginning, how they can become rānījhās” (p. 29). In short, we have observed in the exploration of synonyms to Murshid that Bāhū has uprooted the words from their immediate denotation and utilized them with new connotative significance, purely his own construction as thus and this makes his poetry stylistically innovative and fertile with spiritual teachings.

Bāhū maintains that being the friends of God, Sūfīs are purified with the “ablation of Holy Name” and are bathed in “the River of Oneness” (p. 71). They also appear as “dumb” and deliberately don’t listen to anything except dhikr (“remembrance” or “remembrance of God”) of their beloved-God. Bāhū ends the poem by giving another title, yār (the friend of God) to Murshid as he says: “Their prayers are accepted as they are the friends (yārs) of the Friend, God” (p. 71). Also, as the typical religious scholars rebuke and even charge Murshid with the accusation of infidelity so he is entitled as dardmand (Originally, a Persian word used in Urdu and Punjabi for a “painstricken” person (Elias, 1998, p. 81). However, In Bāhū’s poetry, it stands for the Sūfīs who are charged with infidelity by mullāns, who fail to comprehend Sūfīs’ enlightened ideas. Therefore, Bāhū strongly recommends that the spirituality-seekers should follow Murshid’s footsteps in “steelily” manners so that their archrivals, mullāns may not know about the secrets of their divine love and progress in spirituality, for mullāns being the genuine antagonists of “dardmands” remain alien to their enlightened spiritual world (p. 66). Ritter (1952) while talking about Sūfīs, argues that “whatever happens to them is, in their eyes, always a direct action of God on their behalf. Always they have to deal with God directly. And this direct and intimate relation to God characterizes them as genuine mystics” (p. 9). Under the overwhelming influence of Bāhū’s spiritual thoughts, the denotational purports of the terms have been faded out and the connotational insinuations have been celebrated: “The speaker’s feelings and his state of mind dominates over the denotational meaning: the latter is suppressed and has a tendency towards fading out” (Arnold, 1986, p. 237).

**Bāhū’s Abyāt and the Analysis of Antonyms to Murshid**

For Dullieva (2017), the classification of words in terms of synonym pairs, antonym sets and semantic fields, plays an important role in determining the structural relations between words in the lexical system (p. 1). In this respect, another important formative element of Bāhū’s poetry is the use of antonyms to Murshid. With the employment of Murshid’s antonyms, Bāhū communicated spiritual instructions to the readers without any ambiguity. To this end, first of all, the words, zāhid and ʿābid need our attention. The word, zāhid has Arabic origin, zuhd meaning “renunciation,” “abstinence” or “indifference” (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, p. 383). But Bāhū has used it for a person who considers himself very pious due to his strict observance to legalistic aspects of Islam. Likewise, ʿābid is also an Arabic word derived from ʿibāda denoting to “worship,” serve, “venerate” or “adore” and ʿābid is a “worshipper” or “adorer” (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, p. 87). But Bāhū has used it for a person who is proud for saying prayer five times a day on regular basis. Traditionally, these persons are revered for their outwardly pious conduct in terms of saying regular prayers.
However, as they boast of their worship and present themselves as virtuous persons in front of the masses, they stand opposite to *Murshid* because of their impurified hearts and lack of self-abnegation. It is notable that in their denotive sense, they cannot be treated as antonyms to *Murshid* but it is their connotation that makes them so, yet another instance of Bahù’s poetic use of language. Arnold (1986) has, therefore, claimed that “for a reader without some awareness of the connotations . . . a substantial part of the meaning of a literary text, whether prosaic or poetic, may be lost” (p. 15).

Bahù masteredly assigned new designation to these words by displacing them from their immediate usage. Thipa (1979) maintains: “There are, as it were, certain lexical strategies a speaker uses to convey a particular thought or idea, these strategies, it seems, derive from some internal repertoire of terms which one can use in a variety of ways” (p. 83). Both the persons have been presented in direct contrast to *Murshid* as Bahù proclaims that their *nafs* is “so powerful” that it leads them to “a greedy path” (p. 15). *Nafs* is an Arabic word, meaning “ego” or “soul.” According to Sûfis, the *nafs* in its unrefined form is the ego or the lowest dimension of a person’s inward existence, the animalist or satanic nature in fact, as distinct from the heart (qalb) and spirit (ruh) which are seen as sources of goodness (Elias, 1998, p. 34). Therefore, much of the Sûfi literature emphasizes for the purification of *nafs* so that an individual’s spiritual development is ensured. I further argue that despite the positive meanings of the words, ‘âlim, zâhid and ‘âbid in religious context, paradoxically, these are not considered as such in Bahù’s poetry. Because in Sûfi poetry, paradox is a way to enunciate that reality which cannot be “conveyed in simple logical terms, and it is intended to facilitate transcendence of the rational mind or intellect” (Zebiri, 2012, p. 96). Hence, Bahù has ascribed to ‘âlim, zâhid and ‘âbid some shallowness and the absence of in-depth-analysis of the inner-self.

In Bahù’s poetry, there are numerous examples of bitter reproof on the so-called religious scholars. For instance, the word, ‘âlim is an Arabic word and is derived from the word, ‘ilm which means “to know,” “be aware,” or “have knowledge” so ‘âlim is defined as “acquainted,” “expert,” “learned,” “scholar” or “erudite” (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, pp. 636–637). In Islamic terminology, it particularly stands for a person who is well-versed in the knowledge of Quràn and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Although literally it has very positive meanings yet it does stand opposite to *Murshid*, as Bahù says: “Becoming a scholar (‘âlim) made them proud of their learning” (p. 33). To make the point clearer, Bahù even contrasts hâfiz with *Murshid* because he is “arrogant” (p. 33). It is to be noted that hâfiz is also an Arabic word derived from hifz which means “preservation” “memorization” or “custody” and hâfiz is the person who learns the Holy Quràn by heart (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, pp. 189–190). This shows that Bahù has conveyed spiritual lessons by coining his own antonyms to *Murshid* and this made his poetic diction appealing with respect to the selection of lexical choice.

According to Bahù these religious scholars “roam the streets carrying the Holy books under their arms” and when they find any offer of a promising meal in return, only then these fake devouts “recite the Holy Book with profound interest” (p. 33). Asani (1988) has rightly argued that Sûfî poetry strongly condemns bookish learning and bleak intellectualism as means of approaching the Divine Beloved: “As in Sufi poetry in the classical languages, the main targets of this attack were the “ulama”, the learned theologians and religious jurists who claimed to have the exclusive right to interpret God’s word as embodied in the Qur’an” (p. 98). Bahù is of the conviction that the aim of learning the Holy Quràn should have been to find wisdom, illumination of soul, good manners, love of humanity, and ethical values nonetheless these álims/mullâns have unfortunately gone the other way around because they became arrogant and proud of their scholarship. Mullâns is a term for Islamic cleric and derogatory title for the orthodox Islamic scholars who are very strict in observing and preaching literal Islam to the masses. The term has been frequently used by Bahù with derogatory connotations (Ahmad, 2018, p. 77; Elias, 1998, p. 85). Zebiri (2012) says that Sûfî enjoy such a freedom that is not granted to others as they are free to criticize the authority figures (not excluding God) by the virtue of their special status as “Friends of God” (p. 95). As these religious scholars also pretend to be the Guide in spiritual matters so to differentiate *Murshid* from them, Bahù has adjectivised *Murshid* with the word, kâmîl and this sets him separate from such false preachers or the so-called saints who enter the field of Stûfism to attain material benefits. Kâmîl, a word derived from Arabic word, kamâl, meaning “perfection” “completeness,” or “maturity” (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, p. 840). So *Murshid-i-kâmîl* can serve as a Perfect Guide for traveling on the path of spirituality (Ahmad, 2018, p. 23; Elias, 1998, p. 42). This again shows that *Murshid* is the basic semantic category that governs the meaning-making process of his poetry: “A certain semantic category—the one which unites various linguistic units and determines their interaction—forms the basis of any functional semantic field” (Filyasova, 2019, p. 701).

Bahù upholds that “the (false-preachers) are not God’s seekers (tâlib) yet they force others to become their followers” (pp. 24–25). tâlib is a derivative of Arabic word, tâlîb which denotes to “search,” “quest” or “pursuit” and tâlib means “seeker” or “pursuer” (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, pp. 563–64). But in Bahù’s poetry it stands for a person who negates all worldly desires and longs for God only and therefore it is another title for *Murshid*. In his view, only the real-seeker or tâlib who is obviously *Murshid* deserves to be followed for spirituality-guidance because the “false-preachers” or pretenders of sainthood misguide the illiterate and innocent masses by dividing them in the name of creed, caste and sects.
Contrarily, Murshid promotes the message of fraternity, compassion, tolerance and empathy in the hearts of his followers. Although the false-saints (mashāikh) boast of their learning of the holy texts and “worship God with greater intensity” yet they recognize neither God nor themselves (p. 36). Mashāikh is a plural form of the Arabic word, sheikh, meaning “old man,” “chief” or “head of a tribe” and it is also used as a “title of native scholars trained in the traditional sciences such as clerical dignitaries” or “members of religious order” (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, p. 496). We can say that ālims and mashāikh despite their perseverance to God’s worship fail to purify their hearts from greed and worldly desires. According to Schimmel (1974) Sūfī poetry highlights the limitations of language as a sufficient tool to communicate their profound divine and spiritual expressions and therefore the use of paradox by Sūfī teachers is “meant to shock the hearer, to kindle discussion, to perplex the logical faculties” (p. 13).

In another poem, Bāhū draws our attention to the persons who remain awake throughout night, to say prayers to God but their sleepless nights are without definite purpose, good desires. According to Schimmel (1974) Sūfī poetry. Abelson (1913) maintains that mysticism transcends all the obstructions which isolate race from race and it therefore has very strong homoerotic overtones when applied to love between two human beings and it is very likely that by referring to such love, Bāhū accuses the hypocritical Sūfī guides of engaging in illicit sexual practices (Elias, 1998, p. 43). As Murshid is blessed with īshq-i haqiqī, at many points in his poetry, he has entitled him with āshiq, the person who has the blessings of īshq-i haqiqī. The word, āshiq is derived from Arabic word, īshq, meaning “to love passionately,” “be passionately in love,” “to fit tightly together” or “interjoin closely” (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, p. 614). It is used extensively in Islamic Sūfī poetry and literature to describe selfless and burning love of Allah and His Prophet, Muḥammad (PBUH). Bāhū is of the view that following Murshid’s footsteps is obligatory to be baptized with īshq-i haqiqī of God and for this reason, he discusses the concept of īshq-i haqiqī at length by introducing its antonym, īshq-i majāżī.

By discussing both the concepts with comparative outlook, Bāhū has been able to deliver the spiritual instructions devoid of any structural or semantic ambiguity. Accordingly, he affirms that aql (“rationality,” “comprehension,” “intellect,” “mind,” or “intelligence” (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, p. 630), should be submissive to the demands of īshq-i haqiqī, for this sort of love has nothing to do with the use of human reason. In a poem, Bāhū is of the conviction that those who are gifted with the “true love of God” remain silent and do
not like to disclose the secrets of their love with God (p. 71). In order to point out an unbridgeable gap between 'ishq and 'aql, Bāhū declares that “there is a distance of hundreds of miles between 'ishq and 'aql” (p. 38). We see how he continues integrating the elements of crazy-wisdom in his poetry by challenging the traditional and scientific ways of acquiring knowledge.

According to Bāhū, one needs an untiring, unceasing and sincere devotion to the cause of 'ishq-i ḥaqīqī, as he remarks: “There are thousands of claimers of Love ('ishq-i ḥaqīqī), O Bāhū, but very few are blessed with it” (p. 73). García (2014) proclaims: “the heart enlightened by love suffers from pain and other illnesses of the heart. If a person is not in continuous search for the Beloved, sacrificing precious worldly treasures, he or she will never be close to Him” (p. 339). Additionally, there might be very harsh criticism on the actions of those who are blessed with 'ishq-i ḥaqīqī by the followers of 'ishq-i majāzī. But Bāhū in a crazy-wise teaching style, advises the true lovers of God, not to bother about the complaints and accusations of such people. He encourages them to continue their spiritual journey with perseverance so that they can accomplish spiritual and intellectual knowledge. They are advised to accept such criticism with a smiling face for the sake of their Friend, God. Bāhū concludes the poem proclaiming: “Never lift up your head whilst you are prostrating (praying) even if thousands of people call you infidels” (p. 70). Ritter (1952) remarks that “the lover of God endures patiently, even with joy, the pains inflicted on him by his beloved one (and) submission to the will of the beloved God is dearer to their hearts than to be relieved of their suffering” (p. 15).

This 'ishq-i ḥaqīqī is so essential that Bāhū in one of his poems, upholds that the persons who remain deprived from this beauty of life are never going to succeed because they remain “empty handed in this world and the next” (p. 69). Garcia’s (2014) notes that “faith without love is empty in his (Bāhū’s) view, and throughout the poems he keeps on emphasizing the importance of the love stating that whoever only has faith does not really understand it” (p. 341). To Bāhū, the true love is the only mechanism through which the soul which is otherwise encaged in the material body, can be relieved of its suffering.

One has a real spiritual Guide, Murshid. Therefore, a strong commitment is required by the disciple at every stage of spiritual drive. Bāhū has emphatically mentioned that bay-adab, the rudes and disrespectful cannot know the worth of respect and consequently will not be conferred with any enlightenment of heart and soul (p. 29). The word, bay-adab is a Punjabi word which means “disrespectful” or “discourteous” person (Ahmad, 2018, p. 29). By the same token, for Bāhū, the hearts of the saints are “deeper than the oceans” (p. 57). It is mainly due to this factor that not only their mysterious thoughts but also the secrets and rationale of their actions remain covert from the eyes of their followers/disciples. The saints have a cosmic view of the world around them and they keep the eyes of their hearts open, to truly consume the light coming from God. The disciple should therefore unconditionally yield to his Murshid’s teachings without raising any objections to them: “In its most radical manifestation, holy madness or crazy wisdom transcends the mind and ego-function. As such, it is a specific expression of the disposition of enlightenment itself” (Feuerstein, 2006, p. 351).

According to Bāhū, 'ishq-i majāzī is a “slippery game” which is played by the false preachers who pretend to have love of God but due to this fabricated love, “they will be ashamed of their deeds on the Day of Judgment” (p. 25). Being the followers of 'ishq-i majāzī, they only want to supply themselves with monetary gains or benefits because “they trade in the name of piety and fear not the wrath of God, the spirituality-seekers are therefore required to show an uncompromising obedience to him. He can make the journey of spirituality-seeking-disciples easier by just casting a “favorable glance” on them because he knows the secrets of God through personal meditation and also knows that God’s kingdom is within one’s “self” and not out there (Ahmad, 2018, p. 61). Significantly, Murshid is not proud and therefore considers himself the same as everyone. To Bāhū, keeping fast and making sajadah even for 100 times a day, are not going to work for anyone as long as they are not blessed with Murshid’s “favorable glance” (p. 61). Sajda or sujud in plural form, is an Arabic word meaning “prostration in prayer,” “to bow down” or “bow in worship” (Wehr & Cowan, 1976, p. 397). In Islam, it stands for prostration before God in the direction of the Ka‘aba at Mecca which is usually done during the daily-five-time prayers. The position involves having the forehead, nose, both hands, knees and all toes touching the ground together. Similarly, one may make as many visits to Mecca as he/she likes for the purpose of performing hajj but without purification of heart, none can have an intuitive or “mystical understanding” and “spiritual truths” (Ahmad, 2018, p. 61). Hājī is the pilgrimage to Mecca that all Muslims are ritually obligated to perform it, once in their lifetime, provided that they have the means and it is undertaken on 7th through 10th days of last Islamic lunar month, ṣaḥīḥa, the month of hajj (pilgrimage) (Elias, 1998, p. 25).

I argue that the prayers will be only meaningful, if someone has a real spiritual Guide, Murshid. Therefore, a strong commitment is required by the disciple at every stage of spiritual drive. Bāhū has emphatically mentioned that bay-adab, the rudes and disrespectful cannot know the worth of respect and consequently will not be conferred with any enlightenment of heart and soul (p. 29). The word, bay-adab is a Punjabi word which means “disrespectful” or “discourteous” person (Ahmad, 2018, p. 29). By the same token, for Bāhū, the hearts of the saints are “deeper than the oceans” (p. 57). It is mainly due to this factor that not only their mysterious thoughts but also the secrets and rationale of their actions remain covert from the eyes of their followers/disciples. The saints have a cosmic view of the world around them and they keep the eyes of their hearts open, to truly consume the light coming from God. The disciple should therefore unconditionally yield to his Murshid’s teachings without raising any objections to them: “In its most radical manifestation, holy madness or crazy wisdom transcends the mind and ego-function. As such, it is a specific expression of the disposition of enlightenment itself” (Feuerstein, 2006, p. 351).

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God” (p. 25). Bāhū curses the “world” and “world-lovers” on equal basis (p. 18). For him, only those who have abandoned the world and worldly-love are gifted with ‘ishq-i haqīqi and would enjoy the access to their beloved-God. Ahmad (2018) has observed: “Loving the world means being greedy for material possessions and leaving the world means loving the God or nurturing spiritual values” (p. 18).

As a crazy-wise spiritual teacher, Bāhū directs the searchers of true-love to avoid the company of the followers of ‘ishq-i majāzī and terms them as kusingī (“ill-reputed person,” Ahmad, 2018, p. 81), who should never be befriended for they damage the fame of one’s “family” (p. 81). The word, “family” might refer to an individual’s own family or metaphorically could be applied to all the saints because connotative implications of a word “are not stable and vary considerably according to the ideology, culture and experience of the individual” (Arnold, 1986, p. 49). Hence, the company of kusingī may defame the very saints, with whom the person might have a spiritual association. We see that Bāhū has underlined the synonyms/antonyms of Murshid and ‘ishq-i haqīqi in detail and this helped him communicate his spiritual message to the pursuers of God in transparent manners: “The language a poet uses, is closely bound with his outlook and experience, with his subject matter and the massage he wants to express” (Arnold, 1986, p. 244).

Conclusion

To conclude, Bāhū’s poetry shares the phenomenological elements of the crazy-wisdom and this contributes to the formation of the semantic sphere of his poetry. For, he challenged the traditional practices of religion by undermining their authority in a very iconoclastic and individualistic style. By investigating the rationale working behind his lexical choice, it has been found that Bāhū innovatively exploited the existing Punjabi vocabulary items with new mystic purport/signification. By incorporating crazy-wisdom in his poetry, he successfully presented an alternative Sūfī vision to the one that governs everyday life. Also, his poetry reflects the limitation of human mind and delineates the relationship between Murshid and Murid on spiritual lines; the two formative factors of Sūfī-worldview: “Unlike conventional wisdom, it is not meant to create a higher “order,” a new harmony, that is, a better model of reality. On the contrary, crazy wisdom has the sole function of disrupting our model-making enthusiasm, the phantasmagoria of the mind” (Feuerstein, 2006, p. 354).

This is the reason that the titles that he used for Murshid not only revealed his metaphoric use of language but also furnished an enriched metaphorical and covert recognitions of Murshid: “Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish—a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1991, p. 3). Consequently, this study has demonstrated how connotations or metaphorical uses of the lexemes explored, are intertwined in elucidating the concept of Murshid: a master term that plays a decisive role in the meaning-making processes of Bāhū’s poetry. Each lexeme of the investigated semantic field, corresponds unambiguously to the idea of Murshid, revealing a wider understanding of the term in the context of Sūfī poetry.

The researcher would recommend that there is a plethora of Sūfī literature in Punjabi language that can be investigated in the light of current trends in the study of language, with specific focus on the vocabulary choice that the Sūfī poets exploit in order to enlighten the souls of their readers. Such readings might be instrumental in promoting humanism, peace and harmony in the world; the world which is otherwise scattered and compartmentalized in the name of caste, creed and national affiliations. Llewellyn (2016) claims that reading spiritual and religious literature can have the effect of centering the participants as the meaning makers in their spiritual lives, while being potentially life changing (p. 165).

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